## disques

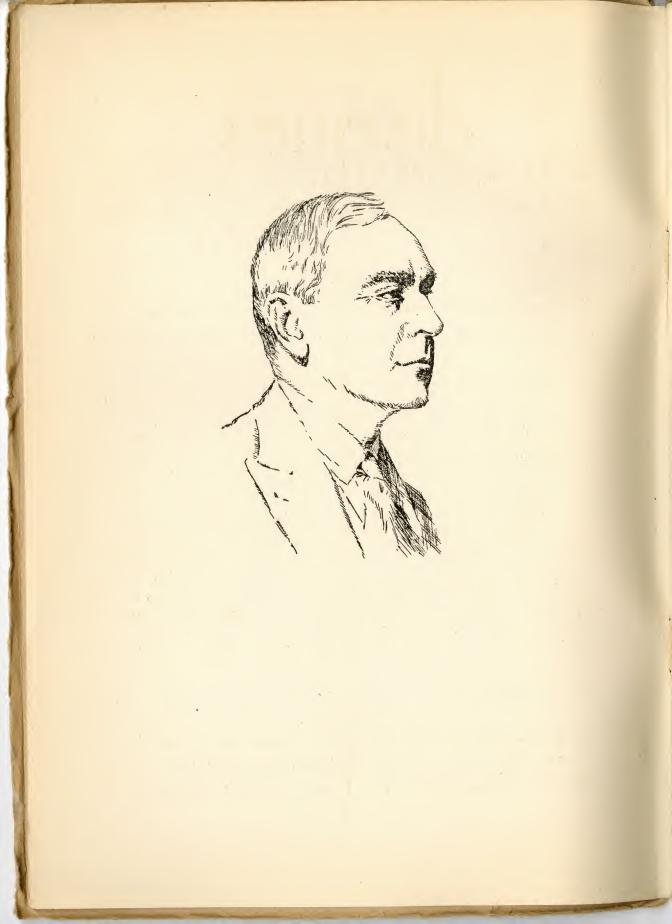
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# disques FOR MAY 1931

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RICHARD J. MAGRUDER, EDITOR EDWARD C. SMITH, ART EDITOR



## SEPER CODY-\$1.50 PER YEAR OLD BY H-ROYER SMITH CO. IOTHE WALNUT STS., PHILADELPHIA, PA, U-S-A-

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OF ALL the baffling mysteries that currently enchant philosophers and those rash persons who are earnestly bent on solving the palpably insoluble, none is more unfailingly interesting and puzzling to the record collector than the discouraging fact that whereas the phonograph apparently flourishes in Europe its progress over here is plainly slow and painful. Collectors returned from Europe are radiant with glowing reports of phonograph shops filled with huge stocks, voluptuous furnishings, and lovely sales-girls who can distinguish between the Brahms C Minor and the Beethoven C Minor. These shops. they claim, thrive on all the main streets of the large cities-and not only one or two such palaces to a town but literally dozens of them, and sometimes several in a single block. How much of this is sober fact and how much inflamed fancy, brought on by indiscreet tippling at the time of the visits to these fabulous record stores, of course, only those who have actually been there can accurately say. But certainly the number of European manufacturers and the quantity of good records issued by them would indicate pretty clearly

that such reports, even discounting the common human failings for exaggeration and strong drink, must still contain a substantial residuum of truth. For it is surely no secret that there are far more phonograph companies operating in Europe than there are in America; and they issue far more good records than are issued in this country. It is to these companies, indeed, that the American companies commonly have to turn for most of the better things that appear in their monthly supplements, which would be depressingly lean were it not for these repressings. Americanmade records are mechanically and artistically among the finest available, but there are far too few of them.

A.

The reason customarily advanced for this lamentable state of affairs is a pretty-sounding one, but it is rather over-worked, and, besides, its enthusiastic adoption by professional malcontents and the like should make one just a bit cautious in accepting it too readily. That reason, it need scarcely be said, is simply this: American culture is far inferior to European culture, and in consequence musical appreciation in America, though growing by degrees, is hardly notice-

able when compared to that in Europe. Whereas every humble German peasant knows and loves all nine of the Beethoven symphonies, not to mention, presumably, the whole canon of Schönberg's works, only a pitifully few Americans have ever even so much as heard of Beethoven. So runs the pleasant belief. This reason would be considerably more plausible if the same condition prevailed in the concert hall and in the fields of literature, drama and the other arts. That is, one would incline more readily to the belief that inferior culture is responsible for small record sales in America if good books, reputable theatres and concert halls were similarly ignored by the American public. Such, unfortunately for the validity of this theory, is not the case. America, with all its faults, its idiotic new doctrines, its puerile philosophies, its crazy censoring of good literature—America, despite all this, nonetheless publishes and reads just as many and just as good books as Europe does. It goes to see just as many and just as good plays, and it hears just as good music. If occasionally some misguided moralist, suffering from the delusion that sin, or what is commonly regarded as such, can be abolished, astounds the country by barring a first-rate book from general circulation on the theory that it will corrupt the morals of five-year-old children and adults of the same mentality, it must not be forgotten that Havelock Ellis' native country, England, still prohibits his Studies in the Psychology of Sex from being published there; in America, doctors and lawyers are at least deemed of sufficient moral strength to read them without deleterious results, and so they are published in this country for members of those professions.

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Thus this reason suffers from certain grave defects, immediately obvious to even the most casual examination. It sounds fine, like the New York Times' boast, "All the News That's Fit To Print," but like it, too, it doesn't work. Perhaps a more effective reason is to be found in the lack of good publicity given records in America. In Europe nearly all the important newspapers, and a good many of the smaller ones, devote considerable space to record reviews. Their phonograph critics are as widely read and are as important as their book reviewers, their dramatic critics, their music critics, their movie critics, their sports writers, and their conductors of columns of advice to the love-afflicted. Moreover, there are quite a few magazines published in Europe devoted exclusively to phonograph records, and many of the important weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies give records a fair amount of space. Nearly all books on musical subjects, too, use records as illustrations, along with the frequently inadequate musical quotations. But in this country disc-reviewing seems to be viewed with considerable suspicion, if, indeed, it is viewed at all. More frequently it is completely ignored: newspapers not only won't print record reviews; most of them have never even heard of such a thing. There is one New York paper—the Times—that reviews records regularly, and in the Herald Tribune, Lawrence Gilman occasionally discusses them in his Sunday column. This is something, to be sure, but not a great deal when it is remembered that out of the hundreds of papers published in America every morning and evening scarcely more than half a dozen have given any visible sign that such things as phonograph records even exist. Yet there is always plenty of space for Miss Clara Bow's newest talkie, or Miss Greta Garbo's, or Mr. Harold Bell Wright's latest great moral lesson. Here we do not mean to say that Miss Bow, Miss Garbo and the chaste Mr. Wright should be denied space; we merely mean that if they deserve it, so, too, do the better records. Maybe not as much, but at least a little. And the same conditions prevail with the weekly, monthly and quarterly magazines. Most all of them review all the better books, but only several—the American Mercury is a notable exception—have even so much as glanced at phonograph records.

3

What America reads America believes, and what America believes in America buys. That is the fundamental principle of modern advertising, and these advertisers have been wise enough to realize that what the public reads in the news columns of the papers is more quickly swallowed as fact than what it reads in the advertising columns. Why American papers and magazines should ignore records we do not profess to know. But it is quite possible that if they were presented with adequate machines and sent the new records, just as they are sent the new books, reviews of the new records would quickly appear in print. And if these reviews were intelligently written, or at least as intelligently written as the book, film, drama and music reviews, and if, in spite of all this, the record industry still languished in America,—if this should happen, then it would be quite easy, perhaps even necessary, to believe that America is, in some ways, a cultural wasteland. It would be time to become resigned meekly to America's relatively mild enthusiasm for the phonograph, without heaving and panting in a futile effort to produce reasons, such as has been going on above.

1

ADOLPH SCHMUCK, whose "The Case for Mere Listening" appears in this issue, is a native of Indianapolis. He is a member of the staff of the Indianapolis News, and has been almost a life-long employé of that paper, acting in various editorial capacities, "but never," he writes, "as a reporter of concerts when I could avoid it. I have, however, been a steady concert-goer since the days when Theodore Thomas was still conducting the Chicago Orchestra and the Kneisel String Quartet (Continued on page 115)

### SUBSCRIPTIONS, INDEX AND BOUND VOLUMES

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### CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word IMPORTED appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, D-Decca, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National, Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

### Dr. Serge Koussevitzky

By ISAAC GOLDBERG

There is a hush of expectancy in the Hall. Subscribers walk to their seats with unwonted softness, lest the creak of a shoe or the inconsiderate rustle of a gown somehow break the spell. Conversation, on other nights so spontaneous, on this night is subdued. Ceremony rises almost to the insinuation of religious service. Symphony Hall, by some magic of wordless suggestion, has begun to thrill with overtones of the divine office. It is no longer a concert auditorium; it is a secular cathedral.

The stage, at the rear, is a crescent of acolytes: young faces and—as will shortly be heard—fresh voices, from the learned sisterhood of Radcliffe, or the brotherahood, equally learned, of Harvard. The youngsters stir in their gilded seats, nervous with the spirit of the occasion. They have been rehearsing for months under Prof. Archibald Davison, a genial master of the chorus who has the happy faculty of transmitting solid enthusiasm. Or perhaps it is the chorus of the St. Cecilia Society, trained under the baton of Arthur Fiedler, pianist and player of the viola in the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conductor of the Boston Sinfonietta and of the recently famous Esplanade Concerts,—a series in the open air, given during the Summer on the banks of the historic Charles River, just across the Cambridge shore on which, like a fairy city in the glow of Summer evening, stand the buildings of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Or, again, the Bach Cantata Club . . . Older faces, older voices . . .

Hemmed in by the chorus, the men of the orchestra in mass formation . . . . Heralds and trumpeters of the host. On this evening there is a special unctuousness even to their tuning, and the A sounds melodiously self-conscious.

All at once the subdued buzzing on stage and in the auditorium dies down. Preceded by the soloists of the evening, the prime mover of the occasion, the director of all these assembled forces, strides quasi-majestically down the steps, bowing to right and left, to the rear and before him, to the tiered singers, the musicians, the enraptured audience.

Dr. Serge Koussevitzky, conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, has made his entrance.

The occasion? It might be the Beethoven Festival of 1929, the Brahms Festival of 1930, the Bach Festival of 1931. Divorcing, for a moment, the music from these scenes, and considering the circumstance as a visual rather than an auditory phenomenon, we discover a procession, a pageant, almost in the tradition of an opera by Meyerbeer. Koussevitzky is not the only conductor with a keen sense for stage effect, but certainly he yields to no contemporary master of the baton in his feeling for the non-musical elements in the performance of music.

Nor is this said altogether in derogation. Perhaps in some Utopia of the distant future we shall learn to hear music with—so to speak—our eyes closed,—with an æsthetic exclusion of visual impressions. Perhaps we shall learn to discount conductorial calisthenics. Perhaps even conductors will learn to confine their manual

and digital heroics to the privacy of the rehearsal. Until then, however, we should be a little grateful to the leader who attempts a pleasant coördination between sound and sight,—who insists upon young faces in his band, who tries to make his gestures a sort of visible editing of the music, who is something of an actor.

When Koussevitzky was first engaged to lead the Boston Symphony Orchestra, there were loud cries in the land. Certainly, on the evidence that for the past lustrum has been before us, he was not the conductor that he has since become. Unquestionably, if he has taught the band, restoring it to the eminence that it enjoyed under Karl Muck, the band has taught him. One epithet, in those early days, resounded above all others: "prima donna conductor." It was not only the Koussevitzkian gestures that helped to explain the phrase; it was the manner in which he treated his music,—his sharp contrasts, his occasionally capricious dynamics, his exaggerated tempos, his re-creating of the composer in his own image. What Bostonians, perhaps unconsciously, were waiting for was a second Muck, after the somnolent Rabaud and the congenial, under-estimated Monteux. And Koussevitzky was almost the complete anti-Muck.

He was preceded by tales romantic and prodigious.

### II

First, there were the persistent rumors of a "prima donna conductor." Conductors, one may easily imagine, are generally exhibitionistic in nature. Nor is that necessarily to be held against them. It has become too easy to trace back our finer qualities to instincts and complexes not so fine. The unadulteratedly "debunking" biographer has, after all, an unbalanced view of things. The debunking spirit itself, on the whole, has clarified our conception and our understanding of the great. It has weaned us (for good, let us hope) from the worshipful attitude with which we used to approach our heroes. We have discovered that the great, somehow, have greatness added unto them when they are presented as human beings, not as impossible paragons. Yet to look with high-powered microscopes for the clay in the feet of our idols is to fall into the opposite error. If our heroes were not divine, neither were they satanic. Humanity dwells somewhere between these extremes.

Koussevitzky would make an excellent subject for debunking in the new manner, —a manner already old. There has been plenty of subterranean gossip about him. It has been rumored that he could not read scores, and that he required the assistance of a pianist in preparing his concerts. Someone became so enthusiastic in condemnation that he denied the conductor's ability to read music altogether, forgetful of the fact that Koussevitzky is one of the world's foremost virtuosi on the double-bass, and that he has even composed in a modest degree.

There is just the grain of truth to these insinuations that helps to spice their malicious innuendo. Koussevitzky, in his study of orchestral scores, has made use of pianistic assistance. Well, what of it? The quality of his conducting appears at rehearsals and at concerts. That quality is measured not by his proficiency on an instrument but by the final result of his preparation. There are expert music critics who play no instrument. What, indeed, does the average

critic do but listen to someone else play music and then record his impressions?

. . . It is whispered that Koussevitzky occasionally, like an imperfect heart, skips a beat,—that complicated rhythmic combinations at times elude him. And of course there are the hundreds of backstage anecdotes that are intended to expose his imperiousness, his personal vanities, his private foibles.

To date, there has been no cheap talk about Koussevitzky and other women than his wife. That phase of his life, even by his avowed enemies, has been left unblemished. And for this, much thanks. The present Madame Koussevitzky (she is the second; the first was divorced before the conductor began his rise to fame) is by common consent a masterly personality. She has queened it to Koussevitzky's king. She has been one of the great powers behind his ascent. Through the arduous routine of his career she is the constant companion, guarding him from harsh contacts and saving him for his exacting labors. In the concert hall she is the most familiar figure, seated where she can command a view of the auditorium. From her throne she watches the proceedings with the eye of a hawk, missing not the slightest detail. For she, too, in her aristocratic fashion, is a conductor.

### III

"Prima donna conductor." A conductor, that is, who emphasizes, first of all, his personal appeal. Gestures for the sake of gestures. A good show. Box-office appeal. Ich und Gott; I, and then the music. One of the first things the critics noticed when Koussevitzky was new to Boston was the fact that he had a good tailor. Appearance may not be everything, but it is a marvelous aid to leaders of symphonic bands. The ladies, early in the Koussevitzkian régime, began their "raving"; that is another of those non-musical elements that makes the fortunes of a conductor. He was so "Russian"; so "temperamental."

He was. Slowly he began to weed out the older men of the orchestra. He wanted youth and the spirit of youth. Minor, yet significant changes appeared, whether in the arrangement of the musicians, the decorations of the hall, the system of lighting. For it must not be forgotten that Koussevitzky, among other things, is an editor. His publishing house in Paris has done much for the new composers. Even as a conductor he is an editor, and an admirable one. There is no leader alive who is more hospitable to the new music, or who has done more to procure for it, in the new world and the old, a ready and a hospitable hearing.

Much of the opposition that Koussevitzky aroused—it is only simple justice to record that every year finds it diminishing—was owing to three dominant traits: his showmanship, his sympathy for modernist music and an approach that is notably—even erratically—intuitive.

His showmanship is always in evidence. He surrounds his festivals with a host of non-musical trappings, and his audiences play up to him in most gratifying fashion. He is a past master in the art of securing applause. His gestures, during the years that he has graced Boston with his presence, seem to have been toned down. At first he used to underscore every phrase with a special sign from finger, hand or arm. He still employs—as does every conductor—superfluous motions that long watching has made predictable. Sometimes such gestures

may map out the divisions and subdivisions of a composition and hence serve an editorial, a descriptive, purpose.

His programs, on the whole, have been alert, exciting, informative, alive. For the present season—the jubilee year of the orchestra—he commissioned from a small company of internationally famous composers a number of pieces specially written for the occasion. Not all have yet been heard, but any season that brings such symphonies as that by Roussel and that by Honneger is already distinguished. Koussevitzky, then, is not only a producer of modernist scores; he is forever inspiring them in his composers. Boston has not had the need of the programautopsies that have of late been going on in the morgues of the New York newspaper columns.

Of Koussevitzky's intuitional conducting there is much to be said. Intuition itself, in these post-behavioristic days, has come in for ardent trouncing. The name covers a multitude of artistic sins, especially as misunderstood in the writings of the Italian philosopher, Croce. Instinct is unconscious integration. There are types of composition to which Koussevitzky, by the very fiat of his make-up, is remarkably adapted. Not this alone; his approach to the classics, even when it is not so fortunate as it might be, often surprises new effects, unsuspected inner voices, unemphasized relationships.

### IV

A man who works largely by his intuitions is bound to arouse suspicion, and even resentment. He lends himself to misinterpretation as a charlatan. Sometimes, indeed, he is victimized by his gifts; is this not often true of the scholar? The players feared Karl Muck, and respected him; Rabaud was a colorless interlude; they respected Monteux but did not fear him because he was too little the disciplinarian. Koussevitzky keeps them at arm's length; he is a taskmaster; he is a martinet; he achieves submission as often as he achieves respect.

A strange characteristic of this intuitional conducting is that the leader becomes enthralled by his score; soon it is conducting him, and the reciprocal influence makes for a peculiarly vivid performance. Niceties may be overlooked; the general design gains in sweep and power. Humanization is a catchword with our new science and biography; well, Koussevitzky is, in that sense, a humanizer of music new and old.

As to his hold upon Boston audiences there is no question. Recently, on a Sunday, at the conclusion of the Bach Festival, the B Minor Mass was repeated. It had been performed on a Tuesday, in two parts, from 4.30 P. M. to 6, and from 8.30 to almost 10. Between these performances had been given a miscellany of piano pieces, organ compositions, cantatas, a Magnificat, selections for the harpsichord, and even an address, by Prof. Bliss Perry of Harvard, on the personality of the founder of the orchestra, Maj. Henry Lee Higginson. The end of the Festival found the communicants—it amounted almost to that—in a high fervor of excitement. Thunders of applause, produced by feet as well as hands, burst upon the head of Koussevitzky, his band and the performers. The noise rivalled that of a political convention. Some of us, who like the Englishman of the proverb take our pleasures sadly, wagged our heads Bachfully. But there it was:

the apotheosis of the season, and of Koussevitzky.

They say that he can hold his position as long as he desires to. The box office smiles at him. The critics, with their inevitable reservations, smile likewise, box-officially. Koussevitzky has made great music popular. He has brought the classics down from the clouds. He has made music more than popular; he has made it exciting. That is not the only way to serve it; perhaps it is not the best way. It is a service, none the less.

### The Case for Mere Listening

By ADOLPH SCHMUCK

In proposing to extol the great pleasures and rich values of mere listening to music I am possessed of a certain sense of sin. In one respect this looks somewhat like advising students that they can escape working out their problems by finding their answers in the back of the book. In another it resembles a suggestion to cast pearls before swine. It violates the feeling that the preciousness and glory of music at its best should not be approached except after some proof of worthiness to contemplate it. Prospero thought it advisable to set Ferdinand to rude tasks to win the privilege of companionship with Miranda, so that he might not value her too cheaply. Brünnhilde induced Wotan to draw a circle of fire around her mountain couch so that only a hero might come near.

With these apprehensions I have sympathy, but the analogies as applied to what I have in mind are imperfect. No analogies about music are perfect, for it is a thing apart, but I shall try some others which may make my purpose seem less alarming. Or perhaps some counterbalancing apprehensions should be taken into consideration. It may be that through maintenance of false ideas of difficulty or worth many persons quite capable of reverence for music at its best are needlessly excluded from its felicity.

The question I mean to discuss is whether one can know music in a highly intelligent and fruitful way without in any manner, professional or amateur, engaging in the playing, singing or composition of music and with very few of the numerous desirable kinds of technical knowledge. I think one can, despite strong presumptions to the contrary. These adverse presumptions are supported by excellent reasons, but now that recording of musical sounds is coming close to perfection, the support for some of the main reasons is losing strength. I am not pleading for contented ignorance. I am seeking candor and clarification of ideas as to musical objectives. I seek to lessen contented ignorance of new sources of fruitful musical knowledge, which may reasonably be regarded as a friend rather than an enemy of old sources and as a stimulus to their use where little such prompting has hitherto existed.

The pleasures and values attending active participation in music can not, of course, be obtained in any other way. But these activities are toward results which can be contemplated or savored in ways having pleasure and cultural values of their own. And intelligent discrimination can be developed to a high degree by these means. Whatever aids may be desirable, it is hardly questionable that a

truly indispensable thing for a developed understanding of music's significance is a large and varied listening experience with first-rate production of first-rate music. Never before has opportunity been so great to enjoy such experience.

### II

In the very ease of this new access to music some see danger. They are anxious lest promptings be lacking to those patient and often strenuous activities without which music can not continue as a live art. But consideration of what has happened in other arts may lessen this anxiety. We recognize as praiseworthy, in its way, the study of literature without authorship in mind, paintings without being a painter, sculpture without being a sculptor, and so on. True, there are differences between these arts and music. The products of all except music are, in their completed condition, static and subject to inspection or re-inspection at will. Music dissolves as soon as it attains completion in sounds, and needs some agency for constant reproduction. For terms of readiest intimacy one has hitherto had to be a reproducer of music by one's own efforts. And notation, the means of musical preservation hitherto in use, requires a special form of literacy. These distinctive obstacles to passive observation of music are now to a large degree removed and music can be approached on the same terms on which other arts are approached. The closest resemblance to music in its new status is in literature. Have incentives to authorship died of the easy accessibility of masterpieces and lesser works of literature? It is hardly likely that music will die of similar accessibility. More probably fine music of kinds hitherto always in danger of death from inanition, because appreciation of it has had to be found in large, concentrated audiences, will hereafter be able to survive by drawing its nutrition from widely scattered sources. Ever since the development of definite notation, incentives to write music have come from the realization that music in notation form can go out to find its appreciators one by one, in large community or small, anywhere in the world, and that it can wait for years and yet find them. Incentives of a similar sort are already at work in the production of music in the form of recorded sounds. No doubt some old promptings to musical activity will die, but there will be compensations. Printing has not killed writing and talk. It has provided new sustenance for them and improved their quality in many places where this could not have been hoped for without it. It has not even killed poor writing and foolish talk. Fears about music's fate seem rather excessive, unless one believes music to be a fixed and exhaustible quantity. (Record collectors are beginning to get over that belief.)

For my belief in the great value of having music close at hand for repeated hearing at leisure, I find strong support in words written, not with recorded sounds in mind but about score reading. They are by Sir Henry Hadow, one of the most experienced and soundest of music critics and scholars. "Imagine," he says, in an essay on Beethoven, "what would be our conception of Shakespeare if we knew him only through public representations on the stage; if we had not the volume to read and re-read, to perpend and study, to assimilate until the thought and cadence of it run in our blood. At most we may see a given play twice or thrice a year, and by seeing it may be stimulated to fuller knowledge and understanding; what if to carry us from one occasion to the next, we had no better resource than imperfect and indistinct recollection? But with a Beethoven sym-

phony our acquaintance begins and ends in the concert room; we may perhaps recall it through a pianoforte version as we may place on our writing table the photograph of an absent friend, but we never think of using the score except as an accessory to the performance. And thus we may shut ourselves out from that intimate personal communion with the work which is the source of nearly all of our love and admiration of great poetry." Many users of phonograph records read scores as they listen, but it is evident that a very large degree of that intimate personal communion with music so highly valued by Sir Henry is obtainable by no more than listening to records. And what we get from records nowadays is not, as he says of a pianoforte version of a symphony, "like the photograph of an absent friend" but comes close to being the friend himself brought home from the concert hall. To say nothing of the intimate friendships one may now form with music we are seldom or never able to come upon in concert halls.

The use of repetition as an expedient in education, particularly in musical education, is so old and apparently so well understood that dwelling upon it may seem unnecessary. But it is so little appreciated in its new application that a great deal of emphasis has to be applied to this point. "Study" of a thing is largely, if not solely, a matter of looking at it repeatedly or listening repeatedly. It does a great deal of the work that often, very naturally, is attributed to activities to which it is incidental, such as analytical examination of the score or repetition in practice. But these effects of repetition are independently obtainable. This is all very simple in its other relations but not in its application to music that requires exceptional skill or exceptional resources to produce. Often (to cite a simple and obvious case of the uses of repetition) we must take two or three glances to recognize even a well-known friend passing us on the street. Repeated looking or listening is needed to clear and fix impressions of any sort. This is not "study," but it has the valuable effect of enabling one to recognize a friend or shun an enemy, personal or other. Repetitions of listening are necessary to receive a distinct impression of sounds and to discriminate as to whether they are welcome or not, or to get used to unpleasantness which may obscure merits.

### III

May I be pardoned for making a few seemingly trivial, over-simplified comparisons in the interest of clearness? "Popular" music is often or nearly always an enemy in disguise. Repeated listening makes it recognizable for what it is and turns liking into loathing. It keeps coming back in all sorts of disguises only to be recognized again and sent to the scrap heap once more. On the other hand, there is music quite as simple, quite as easy to sing or play which is enjoyed continuously or intermittently throughout life. A considerably more widespread good taste exists regarding "simple" and "familiar" music than for "difficult" and "complicated" good music.

Here we may find explanation, in part, for the widespread notion that music difficult to play is difficult to "understand," when the chief difficulty is that opportunities have been too few to hear it and fix the impressions of it. How could one be expected to recognize a symphony as a friend or an enemy simply by one hearing as it passes by? Days, weeks, months, or perhaps years had to elapse before one could observe it pass by again, under old conditions imposed on

musical expression or design. Composers of works like these often live in poverty and are sent to pauper's graves, while the contrivers of clever disguises of inherently vicious music fatten as millionaires. Not that being a millionaire ought to be held up as an incentive to musicianship, but who feels it necessary to deny a really fine musician a little of the joy of finding appreciation in his lifetime? Herein perfected recording of music may provide new incentives to him, new incentives to artists capable of producing his work, new possibilities of firing more intelligent ambitions and objectives for entrance into the practice of music as amateur or professional.

There are aspects of music which seem totally outside the comprehension of one who does not know the technique. These are the problem-solving aspects or the game-playing aspects. How can one "understand" if one does not appreciate the difficulties overcome or the "rules of the game"? But even these things are not so important as they may seem. When the problem solved is in an etude by Chopin, somehow the intelligence of the listener tells him whether the problem was worth solving. But a game objective is not the same as an expression objective. For instance, the object of a golf game is not to drop the ball into eighteen holes in succession. That could be done easily and efficiently by carrying the ball in the hand from hole to hole, which would be a boresome and silly procedure, like some kinds of music, perhaps. There the whole interest consists in doing the thing according to definite rules. That kind of music, of course, the listener without special technical knowledge cannot understand and his admiration may go to any sort of stroke that looks pretty or spectacular. But, it may be said, technique enters also into expression values or design values, in which "it is not so much what is said or done that counts but how it is done." But here the listener can make distinctions as unerringly as if he knew the technique and may even sense them better, for the blend of the how and what makes something distinctive, and the listener can sense distinctions even when he does not analyze them. A "mammy song" by Al Jolson is not only likely to be more sloppy in technique than a fine German Lied about a mother but more sloppy in sentiment. The difference between a mother chromo by a popular picture maker and Whistler's portrait of his mother is not all in the technique, though Whistler preferred to call this portrait a study in gradations of black and white, etc., rather than by its more sentimental designations. So on up to the great Madonnas. These differences are differences that can be sensed, and are what the technique is for. Gradations of differences like this also exist in music, from cheap sentiment to the heights of pure adoration. Their perception is a mark of intelligence, and the intelligent listener apprehends them.

### IV

What aids to mere repeated listening may best be suggested I do not profess ability to say beyond the general suggestion to the incipient music lover not to be cock-sure about what he likes. If he takes snap-judgment he is likely to exclude himself from some of the most glorious privileges of music listening. For he can not really know what he likes—who are his real musical friends—until he associates with them awhile and looks invitingly upon timid or odd-looking, or even blustering musical strangers. Let him not be too worried about being taken

with the musical measles and the other infantile diseases of a developing musical taste. So many persons pass through them safely. Or to put it in another way, even surviving oddities of relish for the peanuts, popcorn and circus types of music may accompany him through life and not interfere with his veneration for Bach, Beethoven and Brahms or any other of the great ones of music—or rather those widely esteemed as great.

For the hopeful music lover, following the method here recommended, will come to realize that there is no short-cut to all the desirable musical culture and that he may need some advice about shorter-cuts to the most desirable destinations. Here he is in danger of bewilderment and despair, for if he explores into the matter very far he may feel some need of guidance to the right guides. Every reverence that he has he will find jeeringly attacked by some confident critic or theorist, often of proved and respected ability. Every vice that he has sought to cast off will find seeming justification somewhere. He may even regard this article (if he happens to be so foolish as to take it as authoritative) as a condonement of vice, which it is not intended to be. Or, after some buffettings almost driving his musical faith to suicide, he may choose advisers and methods of approach to music in accordance with limitations of his own aptitudes and time and pursue his way—not in contented ignorance but with the discontent of dauntless adventure.

I offer a suggestion as to what may account both for undue arrogance and undue humility in attitudes toward music. We are all prone to think of verbal inarticulateness concerning music as a sign of lack of intelligence about it. Technical knowledge helps in providing a handy language for numerous kinds of identification, but descriptive identification is another thing and calls for rare abilities. And it is exactly those values in music regarding which we can never hope to be completely articulate, either in words or as musicians, that make music most fascinating and most inexhaustibly interesting. Only a poet can come nearest to the greatest of them in words. The greatest, the finest, the never-satisfied musicians get still closer to revealing them to us. They are what brings us to stand,



### The Art of Recording

By CHARLES WEYL

More than a thousand years B.C. in the Eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty the statue of Memnon, one of the colossi at Thebes, was said to have given forth articulate utterance in resemblance of the human voice. Despite the fame of Pliny the Elder and Tacitus, who wrote of this manifestation, there is much reason to doubt the authenticity of this statement. In 1779 Kratzenstein invented a machine which pronounced vowel sounds by a purely pneumatic mechanism. A model of this device is still extant.

In 1878 Edison invented the forerunner of all modern talking machines. Although a comparison of this machine with our finest modern electrical reproducers is almost absurd, Edison applied a most extraordinary principle in a beautifully simple manner. In view of the enormous technical advances which have been made in this art in the last ten years, we are inclined to think that our phonographs and records are far more nearly perfect than scientific examination shows them to be.

In order to give an estimate of the present state of this art, together with a forecast of its near future, it will be well to make a brief analysis of the technical factors involved in recording and reproducing sounds. For the purpose of brevity we shall confine ourselves to musical sounds.

It will be necessary to consider three different factors: physical, physiological and psychological. We shall, in the following order, discuss the source of musical sound: its transmission through the air to the microphone; the mechanism which makes a replica of this sound either on a "wax" disc or on a photographic film; the apparatus which retranslates this replica into sound waves in air; and finally the listener.

When we listen to a musical sound we find that it has three fundamental qualities: pitch, loudness and timbre. The range of pitch in musical sounds extends from about eight vibrations per second to fifteen thousand vibrations per second. The loudness range of a modern orchestra covers an energy ratio of one hundred thousand to one, that is, fortissimo has one hundred thousand times as much energy in it as pianissimo. As is well known the timbre of an individual instrument depends upon the distribution and the loudness of its individual overtones. Therefore, for ideal reproduction of music, it would be necessary to make a record which reproduced all of the tones in the pitch range previously indicated, in exact proportion to their original loudness and without the introduction of any tones not in the original.

The machine invented by Edison had a frequency range which did not extend below approximately six hundred vibrations per second nor above eighteen hundred. In other words it was capable of reproducing less than two octaves in the treble register. Even in this range reproduction was not proportional to the original sounds, and the possible variation of loudness was exceedingly small. Let us see where we stand in this matter at the present day. With a good modern commercial reproducer and a good electrical record, the frequency range extends from approximately eighty vibrations per second to five thousand vibrations per second.

Within this range the reproduction is by no means even. Variations of as much as ten times the least audible variation are to be found. These points of variation are called resonant points and are the cause of a quite disagreeable kind of distortion. The loudness range is rarely greater than one thousand to one in terms of energy, which is only one one-hundredth of the range required by the modern orchestra.

In addition to these defects of pitch and loudness, we find that in many machines extraneous sounds not in the original are produced. These latter sounds are of two kinds. First, the well-known record surface noise, both in disc and film, and second what is known as overloading. While both of these noises have been materially reduced in the last few years, they still cause serious distortion.

### II

Let us now consider the process step by step. We shall choose for our source of sound a full orchestra of one hundred men. Offihand it would seem that the best condition for recording the music from such a group would be to seat these men in their normal positions in a large auditorium having good acoustics and do our recording with a full audience present, thereby having the identical conditions which obtain for concert. Where shall we place the microphone? How many shall we use? Suppose that we place one in some favorable listening spot in the audience. We find at once that this will not do, since the noises inevitably present even in a quiet audience become disproportionately very disturbing when recorded. This is largely due to the fact that when we sit in the audience we are accustomed automatically to ignore these noises to an astonishing degree.

Suppose then that we remove the audience and use our single microphone in some chosen position in the house. We have now eliminated the noises due to the audience, but in general we find in their stead an excessive reverberation which exists in most empty auditoriums. This reverberation is far more troublesome when recorded than when directly heard, because we are accustomed to compensate by listening with two ears, whereas the microphone is equivalent to only one ear. Even if we use more than one microphone, the outputs of these microphones are combined before being broadcast, so that the result is equivalent to one ear. It is obviously not feasible to have two microphones, two broadcasting equipments, two wavelength bands and two receivers.

To overcome reverberation, suppose that we replace our audience, and then, in order to reduce the effect of the noise in the hall, place our microphones on the stage. We then find upon recording that the balance of the various choirs in the orchestra is destroyed, since it is approximately equivalent to listening to the orchestra from the stage. This self-evidently will give unnatural results.

Having learned these facts, we once more rid ourselves of the audience, place the microphone in the body of the auditorium and distribute suitable absorbing materials in the empty hall in such a fashion as to reduce reverberation to a proper value, and still we find that our recorded music is unsatisfactory. When we inquire into this last phenomenon, we find that it is due to the fact that the microphone has a selective action with respect to the various instruments of the orchestra. We find, for example, that percussion instruments such as the kettle drum produce a response

all out of proportion to the original and that violins are very directive, their recorded loudness being greatly changed with small changes in the position of the microphone. This calls for a drastic rearrangement of the instruments of the orchestra.

Since so many changes must be made, it is evident that at the present time it is more desirable to record in a studio where all of the factors may be better controlled than in an auditorium. We find upon experiment in the studio that the fewer instruments playing at a given time the more clean and natural is the reproduction. Suppose, therefore, that we use a small instead of a large orchestra. Here we are met with an esthetic problem. The quality of tone of six recorded violins is very dissimilar to that of the usual thirty-six violins, so that if we use a small orchestra an important sacrifice is made.

### III

Let us suppose now that we have made the best compromise in the studio, with respect to all of the factors mentioned. How shall we handle the problem of loudness variation? We have three methods at our disposal. The first one is to permit the orchestra to play as it normally plays: extreme pianissimo to extreme fortissimo without making any attempt to control the volume of sound recorded. If we do this we shall find that the pianissimi are so faint as to be lost in the surface noise and that the fortissimi are so loud as to cause overloading of the apparatus, with accompanying production of very unpleasant extraneous sounds.

The second method is to permit the orchestra again to play normally, and to control the amplification of the recording apparatus in such a manner as to increase the pianissimi to a point above the surface noise, and to decrease the fortissimi to a point below overloading. The result achieved is unsatisfactory from two points of view. First we find too short a dynamic range, with an accompanying loss of emotional quality, and second it leaves the control in the hands of someone other than the conductor. When such a control system is used, a technical operator familiar with the music played must follow the score and anticipate all pianissimi and fortissimi in the manner before described. This naturally binds the conductor to a predetermined performance and greatly hampers his freedom.

The third method disposes with the control operator and permits the amplifier to record the music as delivered to the microphone. In this method the conductor himself avoids extreme pianissimi and fortissimi, keeping the volume of sound of the orchestra within the recordable range. Two marked difficulties arise from this method, one physical and the other psychological. The first comes from the fact that the quality of the sound of any musical instrument changes with its loudness. Consequently, passages intended to be fortissimo have the quality of forte passages. A similar effect is noticeable in intended pianissimi. The second factor, which is more disturbing than the first, is that musicians find themselves so restricted in the short dynamic range that the freedom required for emotional expression is largely lost. We see, therefore, that until a method of recording and reproduction is evolved which permits full dynamic range without the use of human or mechanical restriction we cannot hope to have anything like perfect feproduction of orchestra.

The preceding discussion concerning the recording of an orchestra assumed that

all of the apparatus after the microphone was capable of amplifying, recording and reproducing the output of the microphone perfectly. We saw that even if this were done the results were far from ideal. However, while the amplifying apparatus is very nearly perfect, the remainder of the recording, and more particularly the reproducing mechanism, is far from satisfactory.

The disc record has definite limitations of its own. At present it is not possible to record the full scale of pitches with a full dynamic range. In fact the very lowest and very highest pitches cannot be recorded even for a narrow dynamic band. It is evident that the smallest indentation which the needle is able to follow cannot be less than the radius of the point of the needle itself. Hence many of the higher overtones are lost. In connection with recording on film we meet the same type of limitation, since the smallest variation in the density of the photographic film or the contour of the sound track dare not be less than the size of the grain of the photographic emulsion. Lack of perfect smoothness on the disc record and the granular structure of photographic emulsions produce a constant hissing noise when either type of record is played.

In the reproducing apparatus itself the problems are still more serious. First of all, it is not feasible commercially to build as expensive and highly refined apparatus for reproduction as for recording, since the reproducing apparatus must be made in large number for retail sale. Second, the sound projector (loudspeaker) is the most imperfect link in the entire recording-reproducing chain. Its pitch limitations are greater than in any other part of the system, the usual sound projector being useless below eighty vibrations per second or above five thousand. This means that the fundamentals of the low tones of music are entirely absent, and the higher overtones, which lend significant character to the various instruments, are lost. Furthermore even this limited pitch range is extremely uneven. Marked resonances are almost invariably present in several registers, causing the kinds of distortion ordinarily termed booming, metallic or shrill. There is room for enormous development in the sound projector alone, since the best of these units is comparatively poor.

Owing to the fact that the reproducing apparatus must, for commercial reasons, be built self-contained in a portable cabinet, it is impossible to get an adequate surface from which to project the sound. Next, it is necessary for natural reproduction that the acoustics of the room in which the records are played be regulated for the purpose. This factor, which is rarely considered, is very important. It is evident that a large orchestra playing in a concert auditorium can never sound perfectly natural when reproduced from what is practically a point source. Aside from the difference in the acoustical characteristics of the source room and the receiving room, it is necessary to operate the reproducer at a much lower loudness level. Physiologists have clearly demonstrated that the quality of a heard sound depends upon its loudness as well as its other characteristics, and psychologists have shown that the loudness of a sound plays a part in the emotional reaction of the hearer.

### IV

Even so brief a discussion of the complicated technical phenomena involved in recording and reproduction as has been given will suffice to show how very much

still has to be done, in spite of the enormous strides which have been made in the past few years. Many of the defects apparent in commercial apparatus have already been overcome in the laboratory, and it remains to incorporate the findings of the research laboratory into salable apparatus. It is quite safe to say that the next few years will bring improvements so great that they will make us wonder at our comparative satisfaction with present equipment.

There has been much controversy as to whether better results can be obtained on disc or on film. In the present state of the art the best results in each are equivalent. While it is not possible to know which will be used eventually, there is much reason to believe that disc will give way to film, if for no other reason than that it is practicable to record and reproduce an entire symphony without the unpleasant breaks made necessary by changing records. Films have other advantages. The wear is far less when they are properly handled, and it is possible to make corrections without re-recording an entire five minute section, as in the case of discs.

It is interesting to note that the problem of perfect reproduction is impossible from the physical point of view. However, due to the psychological limitations of the ear and the compensatory reaction of the mind, reproduced sounds may be humanly indistinguishable from their originals and still be far from true physical replicas. On this account there is every reason to believe that at some future time, possibly even within the next ten or fifteen years, recorded reproduction of speech and music will be a practically perfect thing as judged by the most skilled listener.

### (Continued from page 101)

was setting American standards for chamber music. Why I liked such music I don't know, for I can neither play nor sing and am almost wholly illiterate as to notation. I mention these deficiencies not with satisfaction or without some hope still of correcting them, but because I speak as a witness for 'mere' listening."



CHARLES WEYL, who contributes an article on "The Art of Recording" to this issue, is a member of the faculty of the electrical engineering school of the University of Pennsylvania. He has devoted himself to studies of musical sound and the application of physics to medicine. Leopold Stokowski, in his article, "Music in the Air," published in the Saturday Evening Post for March 8, 1930, said: "Professor Sabine, of the Riverbank Laboratories, near Chicago, and Professor Weyl, of the University of Pennsylvania, have done and are doing most valuable work on this subject [science of sound] . . . it is a great loss that when new halls are built such men of expert knowledge and immense experience as Professors Weyl and Sabine are not more often consulted."



The portrait of Serge Koussevitzky, which serves as the frontispiece to this issue, is a reproduction of an etching, made by Edward C. Smith for Disques.

### Manuel de Falla

By JOSEPH COTTLER

Public spectacles. What ought to be determined is the factor of community spirit in individual gratification. I don't mean anything so vast as the common consciousness, Zeitgeist, and all that. I mean rather the question of art limits; good and bad "theatre"; musical assemblies with their conventions of tickets, platforms, and fat ladies who overrun their seats; halls where mob rhythms sweep through the individual, and, like one wave to another, modify him. Presumably, that spectacle which is indifferent to this modification will meet with indifferent response from the coöperative body, and the problem therefore is a practical one in determining whether a given work of art has the elements of public appeal. Dramatists are clearest on the question, but that is because the drama is distinctly a public phenomenon, like patriotism, mass, and highballs. It is impossible to feel patriotic in solitude—that is, there are phenomena of individual nature, too; confessional, the lyric, while confusion of the two types gives rise to strange pranks like tabloid news, an all-Beethoven program, and the diseases of censorship, military draft, or subscription to a season of concerts.

Stricken with the disease, one is fanatical enough to do anything. That is how I explain my dashing madly across the earth in 1928 to attend the International Modern Music Festival in Sienna. It was hot, costly, and Italy was no more interesting than any other antique shop, but—I would hear quarter-tones. I did. Alois Hàba had a suite, performed by Emil Schuloff on the quarter-tone piano, with Hàba "in person" turning pages. The suite was utterly incomprehensible to me, and apparently so to Manuel de Falla, who was there in the front row, but not for long. He left in the midst of Hàba's and Schuloff's agonies, determined to wait his turn in a more pleasant atmosphere. I could not help remarking that Hàba, who looked like a son of the soil, wrote like an academician, while Falla, so studious and spirituel in appearance, expressed the folkways of his race (El Amor Brujo, Noches en los Jardines de España). Therefore, when he stepped out on the platform, I settled down to thoughts of Andalusia and castanets. It was useless. What followed was a complete surprise and a delight: the Concerto for Harpsichord.

### El Amor Brujo\*

Yet Falla stands as the Spanish stylist in the wake of Granados and Albéniz, and it is necessary first to review his work prior to the Concerto. La Vida Breve is outside present considerations, and so we begin with El Amor Brujo, described as a "choreographic fantasy with voices." It is scored for a chamber orchestra of woodwinds, strings, horns and trumpets, timpani and piano, and is a rendering, restrictedly racial, of the life of the Andalusian countryside in all its aspects and glamour. Aptly Falla has chosen for his action one of those legendary tales of which all primitive communities are rich mines. There, in the common human

<sup>\*</sup>El Amor Brujo. (Manuel de Falla) Eight sides. Conchita Velasquez (Mezzo-Soprano) and Orquesta Bètica de Càmara de Sevilla conducted by E. Halffter. Four 10-inch discs (C-LC10 to C-LC13). \$1.50 each.

experiences of love, hate and faith, are to be found the special accents of passion and superstition. There are no complex elements in the story and none in the musical setting. In a sense, "race" is the most mystic and baffling of concepts, something the intuition alone can grasp. Intellectually, however, it is a non discitur, and Falla is too indigenously the Andalusian and too much the man of taste to discourse about his subject. Never does he fall into the trap of commenting vaguely of life in general, which, at its best, becomes an abstruse arhythmic searching, and at its worst, a sentimental exercise, and, in any case, a challenge to the individual. His effort is rather to present the character of one public to another. Here is the explanation of his fitness for the concert hall. He is, if it is possible so to be, merely the instrument through which the spirit of the folk reveals itself in all its exotic splendor and inarticulate violence.

Musically the essence of a race is its rhythm. By its dance do you know them; people of the waltz, the polka, the fox-trot, the tango. El Amor Brujo, therefore, is choreographic and rhythmically heavily charged. The voices are highly spiced solo chants, the performers in this production, and under Falla's direction, I suppose, delivering their parts like street singers. None of your vocalism. Utter the real cry with the very throat of the Moor . . . But, generally, the work is a series of dances bound together by atmospheric strips, like the Introduction which is a fanfare preluding the Canción del Amor Dolido. It is descriptive music, the kind that demands and here gets fine orchestral treatment. To have heard the famous Danza Rituel del Fuego or the Danza del Terror in the piano transcription only, is to have missed their effectiveness, like a rustic señorita without her mantilla, or a tango in tweeds.

Now a few rhythms alone are a slender enough basis for an extended work, and El Amor Brujo is not without its dull spots. Falla's case is that of an honest biographer with a dull subject. Any but simple harmonies and any contrapuntal devices whatever will betray his race. Mainly by his clever syncopations and vigorous orchestration is he able to create interest. This point, however, is the one to belabor in regard to the Noches en los Jardines de España.

### Noches en los Jardines de España\*

It is a symphony in three gardens for piano and orchestra, and sounds indicative of Falla's association with Ravel and Debussy in Paris in 1907. In the second movement, in fact, *Danza Lejana*, based on a tango rhythm, he sells his Spanish soul to the French impressionists for the throbbing and trilling—whole tones and all—and turns the transaction to good account only when the movement dies away in harmonization so piercingly beautiful, high up, soft and close.

The first movement, En el Generalife, is tantalizing. Its theme, a murmuring cadence of two notes a step apart, keeps up an incessant beating. And that's all. The composer avoids developments. He scarcely modulates. He augments or diminishes his rhythm by his sonorities and sails dangerously close to the obvious

<sup>\*</sup>Noches en los Jardines de España. (Manuel de Falla) Six sides. Manuel Navarro (Piano) and Orquesta Bètica de Càmara de Sevilla conducted by E. Halffeter. Three 12-inch discs (C-LCX13 to C-LCX15). \$2 each.

in the management of his pastels. It is all too piquant and as tenuous as castles in Spain, until one is exasperated enough to cry: but the music! where is the music?, forgetting that Spain is as unsubstantial as its castles. Spain is a flavor. Anyhow, the triumph of the last movement is substantial enough, for it evokes more dazzling images than any Spanish music I have ever heard.

### Harpsichord Concerto\*

Yet I was delighted with Falla's un-Andalusian humor in the Concerto, and the pleasure, as I recapture it on these records, is still strong. The sources of this later composition are still the folk-lore that formerly beguiled Falla, but the treatment is more independent, more intimate, less public. Of its origin, there is some direct information from the pen of Wanda Landowska for whom the Concerto was written. In 1922, Landowska, on a tour through Spain with her harpsichord, visited Falla. She found him at work on his puppet opera (El Retablo de Maese Pedro) and confronted with a problem. He must use some ancient instrument in the score of El Retablo but which one? He was not sufficiently acquainted with any to choose. Landowska modestly suggested the harpsichord and convinced him to the extent that Falla was inspired with a Concerto for the instrument, in the sense in which Noches is a concerto for piano and orchestra, the solo instrument a part of the general orchestration.

Determined to build around the harpsichord, the composer limits his problem: what shall be his complete instrumentation? The fragile reedy tone of the harpsichord consorts ill with any sonorities that are ample and reverberant, but might blend with the woodwinds and deeper strings. The harpsichord, moreover, does not sustain its tone well and would be overpowered by any full legato effects. Hence the score must be active, contrapuntal. Finally, the ensemble being an antique one and posturing antiquely, what more natural than that old forms be used: allegro, lento, vivace? That is how Falla must have conditioned the opus so unique in contemporary music.

He is really not attempting to resurrect the dead, or backing to Bach. The sentimental or the superficial listener will be misled by the musty timbre, the sequences, the striding bass, the retard at the end, the mechanical freshness. But these conventions are only the accidents involved in meeting the problem of writing for the harpsichord. The abrupt and frequent changes of key or episode, if nothing else, mark the Concerto as vitally of our time. His former elegance, Falla shuns monastically. This time he plays a barrel-organ, not a lyre. The harmonies—when the polyphony demands that the strings, winds, and harpsichord each go their own way—are tart and dissonant.

Has Falla left Andalusia for good? That is hardly likely. Even the purely instrumental Concerto with its classic plan shows itself to be the work of a dramatic master, interested in problems of décor and the fitness of his art to action. The figures and fictions of Spain are the proper métier of Falla, and they will continue to take him, let us hope, toward the great Spanish opera.

<sup>\*</sup>Concerto for Harpsichord, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and 'Cello. (Manuel de Falla) Four sides. Manuel de Falla (Harpsichord), Marcel Moyse (Flute), M. Donnbeau (Oboe), M. Godeau (Clarinet), M. Darrieux (Violin) and M. Cruque ('Cello). Two 12-inch discs (C-LFX92 and C-LFX93). \$2 each.

### **ORCHESTRA**



**BEETHOVEN** 

B-90140 to B-90143 SYMPHONY NO. 2 in D Major, Op. 36. Eight sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Erich Kleiber. Four 12-inch discs in album. Brunswick Set No. 27. \$6.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 8.

C-67875D to C-67879D HAMMERKLAVIER SONATA in B Flat, Op. 106. (Arr. Weingartner) Ten sides. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Felix Weingartner.

Five 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 153. \$10.

Miniature Score: Breitkopf & Härtel No. 2664.

Scarcely a month passes, nowadays, that one or another of the Beethoven symphonies doesn't appear on the lists. In February, for example, Mengelberg and the Philharmonic-Symphony offered the First, in March Dr. Schalk and the Vienna Philharmonic produced the Fifth, and now Brunswick represses Kleiber's version of the Second, made for Polydor last year. Despite all the recordings, re-recordings and repressings of the nine symphonies, an entirely satisfactory set of these works is not yet available. What we have now will suffice for the present, but it won't be long before we shall be amply justified in demanding a really first-rate recording of the Ninth and several of the others which, despite their many substantial merits, still do not measure up fully to the standards of present day recordings. There is still plenty of room for another Eighth, another Fourth, perhaps another Fifth, and surely the possibilities of the *Eroica* have not yet been completely exhausted.

The Second, though it shows plain signs of the Mozart and Haydn influence, also gives unmistakable evidence of what Beethoven was to accomplish later in the symphonic form. Throughout greater freedom and daring are noted; the instrumentation becomes increasingly elaborate and abundant; a ribald Scherzo occupies the place of the customary Minuet; in the Finale it is possible to detect some of the unrest and sweeping passion that were later to crystalize so magnificently in the first movement of the *Eroica*. All this, of course, was exceedingly disconcerting to the audience that heard it at the first performance in Vienna, April 5, 1803, when one critic, saddened and dismayed at Beethoven's rash indiscretion, observed that the composer's "anxiety to achieve something novel and surprising was much too evident." It would be instructive to hear what this critic had to say of the *Eroica*.

It has often been remarked that despite Beethoven's woes at the time of the composition of the Second—his deafness was growing serious and he was, as usual, going through the tantalizing agonies of love—none of his physical pain and mental torment seems to have affected the symphony; at least, listening to the work, one would never suspect that it was written by a profoundly miserable and



unhappy man. High spirits, good humor and irresistible gaiety are encountered at every turn. Those who subscribe to the familiar theory that the artist works best when troubled most surely have plenty of evidence available to support their belief effectively. The interpretation attests to Kleiber's considerable skill as a conductor and to the proficiency of the musicians of the Berlin State Opera Orchestra. The recording, likewise, attests to Polydor's noteworthy achievements in producing well-balanced, clear and life-like reproductions. In fine, an admirable set of records and an adornment to the Brunswick album shelf.

Weingartner's recording of his own arrangement for orchestra of the Hammer-klavier Sonata was the subject of an article by Ernest Newman in the February American Mercury. The set was reviewed on page 458 of the January issue of Disques, when the imported pressings were issued.

### **MOZART**

PA-P.9538 and PA-P.9539 SERENADE FOR 13 WIND INSTRUMENTS No. 10 in B Major. (K.361) Four sides. Members of Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Fritz Stiedry.

Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 100.

B-90144 and B-90145 EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK (Serenade). (K.525) Four sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Oscar Fried. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 218.

C-G50286D

IL SERAGLIO: Overture. (K.384) Two sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 663.

"I have heard a piece for wind instruments by Herr Mozart today. Magnificent! It consisted of thirteen instruments, and at every instrument a master! The effect was grand and magnificent beyond description!"

So, breathlessly, wrote an appreciative contemporary of Mozart's after hearing this Serenade given at a concert of Stadler's in Vienna in 1784. Compositions for wind instruments alone—then called *Harmonie-Musik*—were exceedingly popular in Munich in Mozart's day, and Otto Jahn conjectures that the composer, anxious to distinguish himself by producing an important piece of the kind, wrote the Serenade especially for the Munich orchestra. The work was composed in 1780, though parts of it had been used by Mozart earlier in other compositions. Grove's advances the possibility that additions to the Serenade were made in 1790.

To write a work for wind instruments alone requires a high degree of skill and dexterity. It requires a special and minute knowledge of the resources of the wind instruments, of their tone qualities, of their faults and virtues. Deprived of the color, warmth and solidity imparted by the strings, the composer must seek



to manipulate his instruments so cleverly and effectively that the listener is never conscious of the strings' absence. There must be lightness, dash, movement, exhilarating runs and flutterings. Monotony and heaviness must be avoided at all costs. All this Mozart accomplished with consummate ease in this work, which shows that he was on thorough speaking terms with the wind instruments. All the movements are carefully written, well constructed, thoughtfully planned and full of felicitous touches. Graceful tunes, unusual combinations, engaging harmonies and attractive effects abound, making the Serenade an altogether enjoyable affair.

For the present the phonograph can perform no more useful service than making it possible for us to hear works not often heard in actual performances—works, for example, like this Serenade. The performers here, taken from the admirable orchestra of the Berlin State Opera, are obviously very competent, and the recording is excellent, even reproducing, at the very beginning, two faint but determined knocks, evidently Dr. Stiedry signalling his forces to begin.

The Eine kleine Nachtmusik has already been done several times, but this version by Fried and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra more nearly approaches a thoroughly satisfactory recording of the work than either Dr. Weissmann's, for Columbia, or John Barbirolli's, for Victor, the two domestically available sets. In beauty of interpretation, in realism of the recording, and in excellence of the orchestral tone, Fried's is immeasurably the superior. . . Dr. Weissmann is always a dependable conductor, and no matter whether it be Mozart, Liszt, Bellini, or Richard Strauss one can generally rely upon him to produce a good, well-rounded recording. You may not be infallibly thrilled with his records, but there are few downright disappointments among them. The Overture to Il Seraglio is no exception. Well-recorded, competently played and modestly priced—these are virtues not too frequently encountered in records. They can be found in this disc.

MOUSSORG-SKY-RAVEL DEBUSSY-RAVEL V-7372

to V-7375 PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION. (Moussorgsky-Ravel)
Seven sides and

SARABANDE. (Debussy-Ravel) One side. Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-102. \$8.

SAINT-SAËNS

V-9908 to V-9911 SYMPHONY NO. 3 in C Minor, with organ, Op. 78. Eight sides. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola. Four 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-100. \$6.50.

Both of these sets, now released on the regular Victor list, were reviewed last month, the Moussorgsky-Ravel affair on page 60 and the Saint-Saëns Symphony on page 76. In the *Pictures at an Exhibition* set, the Boston Orchestra and Koussevitzky achieve perhaps their most successful recording to date, and very much the same thing can be said of Coppola's version of the Saint-Saëns work, played last Winter by Toscanini and the Philharmonic-Symphony.



ROSAMUNDE: Overture. Two sides. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Wilhelm Furtwängler. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 24.

The phonograph companies have been turning to Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert rather frequently of late, digging up some unfamiliar works along with the old stand-bys. With this tendency few will care to quarrel, but it is to be hoped that it won't be long before Haydn, too, is explored with something properly describable as thoroughness; there are dozens of his symphonies and quartets that have not yet been touched and that demand to be recorded. Until they are, the phonograph repertory, now so well-stocked and comfortably filled, will still reveal some disconcerting gaps to the experienced eye. . . . It is pleasant to note each new Furtwängler release, for he is not only an admirable conductor, but he seems to understand recording work uncommonly well. His version of the Overture to Mendelssohn's Midsummer Night's Dream was one of the most distinguished recordings of last month, and the same superlative qualities, artistic and mechanical, that contributed toward making that recording a memorable one are found in equal abundance in this version of the joyous Overture to Rosamunde. Under Furtwängler's competent baton, the Berlin Philharmonic performs with superb precision, resulting in a delightful interpretation, perhaps not so free and spontaneous as Sir Hamilton Harty's record of the work, but nevertheless one that makes immediately obvious the fine tonal qualities of the Berlin orchestra and Furtwängler's complete control over his men. Owners of electrical machines will find that fibre needles are well worth trying with these Brunswick records.

### FAURÉ RAVEL B-90148 and

B-90149

PELLÉAS ET MÉLISANDE: (a) Prélude; (b) Fileuses; (c) Sicilienne. (Fauré) Three sides and

PAVANE POUR UNE INFANTE DÉFUNTE. (Ravel) One side. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Albert Wolff. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Debussy's opera has perhaps obscured to a degree the very attractive qualities of Gabriel Fauré's incidental music to Maeterlinck's Pelléas et Mélisande, written for a performance of the drama by Mrs. Patrick Campbell in London. While scarcely equalling Debussy's felicitous and eminently proper setting, Fauré's work, better known in the form of an orchestral suite, contains merits of its own, and they are by no means inconsiderable ones, as this recording demonstrates. Its sensitive and apposite interpretation of the drama, its captivating poetry, and its effective suggestion of tragedy all contribute toward giving this subdued and quietly eloquent music a charm and individuality unmistakably fine. The Spinning Song music, moreover, accompanies a scene Debussy omitted in his opera. Wolff's sympathetic interpretation is well-recorded. . . Ravel's familiar Pavane pour une infante défunte fills out the set acceptably. It is finely played and recorded.

SIBELIUS V-7380 THE SWAN OF TUONELA, Op. 22. Two sides. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski.
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Reviewed on page 70 of the April, 1931, issue.

**GOLDMARK** 

V-9927

to V-9931 RUSTIC WEDDING SYMPHONY, Op. 26. Ten sides. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Robert Heger. Five 12-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-103. \$7.50.



This set appears as the feature on Victor's Educational List No. 10. The imported pressings of the work arrived last Fall, and the work was reviewed on page 351 of the November issue. More a suite than a symphony, the work is in five sections—Wedding March, with Variations; Bridal Song: Intermezzo; Serenade: Scherzo; In the Garden; Dance and Finale—each a tone poem. The Rustic Wedding Symphony isn't encountered very frequently on programs today, which is a pity, for it contains some very charming and effective music. Though in spots it undeniably does sound old-fashioned and homely, it contains so many lovely melodies and brilliant effects that it makes very easy and agreeable listening. Of the three conductors who record most frequently with the Vienna Philharmonic, Robert Heger, Franz Schalk and Clemens Krauss, the first-named, who conducts this set, seems more consistently successful than the others. Those who are familiar with Heger's superb reading of the Love Scene from Strauss' Feursnot, one of the outstanding releases of last year, will not have to be told of his conductorial abilities. The recording is capital.

WAGNER V-D1815 IMPORTED

LOHENGRIN: Prelude to Act 3. London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One side and

DIE WALKURE: Ride of the Valkyries. One side. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Miniature Scores: Philharmonia Nos. 39 and 123.

Despite the increasing excellence of modern electrical recording, the new records of the Prelude to the third act of Lohengrin somehow fail to reach the high standard set by Dr. Muck and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in their old acoustical recording for Victor, made years ago. It is a remarkable disc; played on a modern electrical machine, it comes out with unexpected clarity and volume. It is a creditable souvenir of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in the Muck régime. This new version of the Prelude, of course, is beautifully recorded, and Coates is always a reliable Wagnerian conductor. . . . The Ride is not, as would be expected, a new recording. It is the same performance as that contained on record V-9163, released by Victor a few years ago. Not an entirely satisfactory performance, its mechanical flaws are unpleasantly accentuated by the present fine state of recording excellence.

**FALLA** 

C-LC10 to C-LC13

IMPORTED

EL AMOR BRUJO. Eight sides. Conchita Velasquez (Mezzo-Soprano) and Orquesta Bètica de Càmara de Sevilla conducted by E. Halffter. Four 10-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

This recording is reviewed in the article, "Manuel de Falla," published elsewhere in this issue.



V-EG1687 and V-EG1688 FROM FOREIGN PARTS: (1) Italy; (2) Germany; (3) Spain; (4) Hungary. Four sides. Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Clemens Schmalstich.
Two 10-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

Various suggestions have been made, from time to time, that more of Moszkowski's works be put on records. The list of his recorded compositions is a pretty slim one, so that this set of his Aus aller Herren Länder, Op. 23, which was originally written for piano (four hands), should win wide approval. For all their lack of substance, these pieces are attractive and colorful, especially so in the spirited performance and excellent recording that they receive here. Moszkowski, in fact, was a deft and exceedingly accomplished contriver of engaging trifles, and these are among the best he ever wrote. As presented here, they should provide an enjoyable fifteen minutes or so.

MOSZKOW-SKI POSADAS V-36036 MALGUENA Spanish Dance (from Boabdil). (Moszkowski)
One side and

ABANDONADO Waltz. (Guillermo Posadas) One side. Victor Concert Orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Moszkowski piece is conducted by Rosario Bourdon, the waltz by Nathaniel Shilkret. The Moszkowski number is done with great brilliance and vigor, and the recording is first-rate. The waltz is a poor one, and the elaborate treatment which Shilkret gives it fails to hide its dullness.



### CONCERTO

### DVORÁK

PA-E10856 to PA-E10858

and PA-E11071

and PA-E11072

IMPORTED

CONCERTO IN B MINOR for 'Cello and Orchestra, Op. 104. (Dvorák) Emanuel Feuermann (Violoncello) and Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted by Michael Taube. Nine sides and MENUETTO. (Valensin-Danbé) One side. Emanuel Feuermann (Violoncello) with piano accompaniment by Michael Taube. Five 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score: Philharmonia No. 180.

It was a happy idea on somebody's part to have this ingenious and altogether charming 'Cello Concerto of Dvorák's recorded, for it is not only a piece well deserving prompt inclusion in the record repertory, but it also brings another, and not too familiar, work by Dvorák to the attention of the phonograph audience. What is more, the literature of works for the 'cello is somewhat limited, so that admirers of the instrument only too often are compelled to content themselves with arrangements—most of them absurd—and such meagerly satisfying substitutes.

The first two movements were released by Parlophone sometime ago, and in

N. St.

consequence there has been considerable speculation as to when, if ever, the third movement, needed to complete the set, would be issued. Now, just as hope was flickering weakly, the third movement appears, completing the work and causing amply justified rejoicing on the part of Dvorák admirers.

The Concerto is by no means a piece whose main purpose is to explore to the fullest extent the resources of the 'cello. In fact, its very lack of technical brilliance has caused some misguided persons to speak in rather slighting terms of the work, alluding icily to its homely and crude character. A new book on Pablo Casals by Lillian Littlehales relates an incident showing Casals' devotion to the piece. Scheduled to play the Concerto at a certain town, Casals arrived at the concert hall too late for rehearsal. Just before the concert, the conductor, anxious to obtain the soloist's ideas as to tempi and such matters, burst into the room, cursing the Concerto and advising a change in the program. Casals, his feelings outraged at the conductor's violence, refused to take part in the concert, and a law suit followed. Since Casals, whose taste in music appears to be somewhat above the level of most virtuosi, has such a high regard for the work, the protests of those who complain that it lacks technical brilliance and finish need not prevent anyone from deriving solid pleasure from the Concerto.

There are many fine, amiable tunes here, and they are marked with a laudable sincerity and depth of feeling. Feuermann negotiates the work in fine style, and he is ably backed by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra. The recording, in parts, leaves something to be desired. And the *Menuetto*, on the odd side, isn't much of an asset to the set.

### MOZART D-TF141 to

D-TF144

CONCERTO IN D MAJOR (Coronation) for Piano and Orchestra. (K. 537) Eight sides. Magda Tagliafero (Piano) and Pasdeloup Orchestra conducted by Reynaldo Hahn. Four 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 719.

V-L835 and V-L836

CONCERTO IN D MAJOR for Flute and Orchestra. (K. 314) Four sides. Marcel Moyse (Flute) and Orchestra conducted by Piero Coppola. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

National Book Weeks, Speak Respectfully to Your Wife Weeks, More Whoopee Weeks, Better Baby Weeks and No Cursing and Drinking Months are fairly common in America, where it is impossible to find a practical illustration of the meaning of the word "sin." Such weeks and months, if we may judge from the great number of them that occur each year, are heartily endorsed and enjoyed by the public at large. It is puzzling, but surely extremely pleasant, to note that the practice has not yet spread to the record industry. Otherwise, we might very easily have been dazzled during the past year with a Buy More Beethoven Records Month, or a National Brahms Month or a Get Next to Wagner Month. There were, it will be recalled, several months during 1930 when recordings of works written by one or another of these gentlemen dominated the lists. That the current



month is not officially set aside as a Boost Mozart Month may be offered as a devastating and unanswerable reply to those deplorably unscrupulous and ungrateful persons who stubbornly maintain that this is not the best of all possible worlds.

For here, all at once, are offered us, quietly and unostentatiously, excellent recordings of Mozart's Piano Concerto in D Major (Coronation) and Flute Concerto in D Major. And elsewhere in this issue are reviewed in their proper places a Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments, the Eine kleine Nachtmusik, a Piano Trio, a Clarinet Trio and the Overture to Il Seraglio—all good examples of Mozart's musical thaumaturgy and all, with the exception of the Eine kleine Nachtmusik, not very familiar to the average music lover.

The Piano Concerto in D Major is the next to the last of Mozart's piano concertos. It was completed in February, 1788, just after his return from Prague. The year 1788 produced, in addition, the three last symphonies: that in E Flat, that in G Minor and that in C Major. So that, everything considered, 1788 may be considered a fairly abundant one in Mozart's life. The Concerto is known as the Coronation because Mozart played it at Frankfort during the ceremonies connected with the coronation of Leopold II, who was crowned in 1790. This was not, however, the first performance of the work. The accompaniment calls for one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani and strings.

The Concerto is full of those sunny, tantalizing melodies which Mozart turned out with such incredible swiftness and which baffle adequate description so successfully. The writing is felicitous throughout, and the accompaniment is skilfully calculated to show off the piano without giving that instrument undue prominence. These are the first Decca records to be reviewed in Disques. The recording, at its best, is equal to the finest we get nowadays; at its worst—and such moments, luckily, are rare—it is rather confused, blurred, harsh. On the whole, though, the reproduction is commendably clear and accurate, the balance between the solo instrument and orchestra is well maintained, and the record surfaces are free from any offensive scratch. The pianist, Magda Tagliafero, plays the work with the requisite lightness of touch; she is ably supported by the Pasdeloup Orchestra conducted by Reynaldo Hahn, several of whose songs have found their way on to records.

The Flute Concerto was written some ten years earlier than the Coronation. Provided with a suitable and well-ordered orchestral background, the flute is capable of producing some ravishing effects, and none knew this better than Mozart. Speaking of this Concerto, Otto Jahn observed: "It is lively and cheerful, without laying claim to deeper significance; the accompaniment, although kept well in hand, betrays in little touches the practiced hand of a master." Moyse's ability as a flutist, of course, is well known to record collectors, and here he quite out-does himself. The accompaniment, for two violins, viola, bass, two oboes and two horns, keeps the flute well in front, but it also contributes some delightful moments of its own. Coppola handles his small band with his usual skill. The recording is entirely first-rate and misses very little.

FALLA C-LFX92 and

C-LFX93

CONCERTO for Harpsichord, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Violin and 'Cello. Four sides. Manuel de Falla (Harpsichord), Marcel Moyse (Flute), M. Donnbeau (Oboe), M. Godeau (Clarinet), M. Darrieux (Violin) and M. Cruque ('Cello). Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.



C-LCX13 to C-LCX15

NOCHES EN LOS JARDINS DE ESPANA. Six sides. Manuel Navarro (Piano) and Orquesta Bètica de Càmara de Sevilla conducted by E. Halffeter. Three 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

One of the principal festivals in Spain this Spring was held at Cádiz, principally in honor of Manuel de Falla. The Orquesta Bètica de Càmara de Sevilla, conducted by E. Halffeter, the young composer, whose Dance of the Shepherdess was recently issued by Columbia, was scheduled to take a prominent part in the festival. The above recordings are considered in the article, "Manuel de Falla," published elsewhere in this issue.

### PIANO



DVORÁK ARENSKY V-B3634 SLAVONIC DANCE No. 15. (Dvorák) One side and WALTZ from First Suite. (Arensky) One side. Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson (Two Pianos). One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

MOSZKOW-SKI

V-L828

DANSES ESPAGNOLES, Op. 65. Two sides. Denise Herbrecht and Lucien Petitjean (Two Pianos).
One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

Rae Robertson and Ethel Bartlett have made several excellent recordings for the National Gramophonic Society—their records, indeed, are among the finest things to be found in that excellent organization's catalogue—and their work is well known in America through their frequent concert tours. Under their skilful fingers, the Dvorák dance comes off delightfully, and the Arensky waltz fares with equal success. Nor can any serious fault be found with the recording, which has been done carefully and with a high degree of realism. All in all, a thoroughly delightful little disc. . . . The Moszkowski disc, giving Moszkowski's Spanish Dances, is well-played and admirably recorded; the recording, indeed, is the most attractive feature of the record, and it can be compared favorably with the finest piano recording to date. As for the music, it is light and tuneful and commonplace. These dances, incidentally, first brought Moszkowski recognition from the public. They bring back memories of the far-off days when moving picture houses depended upon a piano for music rather than, as now, the loudspeaker.



ORGAN FUGUE in G Minor. (Bach-Samaroff) One side and THE WHITE PEACOCK from Roman Sketches, Op. 7. (Charles T. Griffes) One side. Olga Samaroff (Piano). One 12-inch disc. \$2.

**LISZT** B-85002

HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY No. 6. Two sides. Alexander Brailowsky (Piano). One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

J. STRAUSS-ROSENTHAL PA-P.9542

WIENER CARNEVAL über Themen von Johann Strauss. Two sides. Moritz Rosenthal (Piano). One 12-inch disc. \$2.

O-171.105

PAGODES. One side and VALSE ROMANTIQUE. One side. Marius-François Gaillard (Piano). One 12-inch disc. \$2.

In arranging the Bach fugue for piano, Olga Samaroff has been extremely successful: the piece, indeed, seems made for the instrument. Her performance is likewise excellent. Anyone who approaches Bach with timidity and misgivings should be given this disc as a starter; well-played and magnificently recorded, it is one of the most effective piano recordings issued in months. That Victor has made tremendous progress in the quality of its piano recording can be easily demonstrated by comparing this record with any of its earlier releases. . . . The untimely death of Charles Tomlinson Griffes in 1920 brought to a close the career of one of the most talented and promising of American composers. Still a young man when he died—he was born in 1884—Griffes did not have time to achieve the things many critics believe he might have achieved. The White Peacock is a lovely and effective little piece, and comes from Four Roman Sketches for piano (after poems by William Sharp). The recording and interpretation are beyond cavil. . . . The Brailowsky disc is splendidly recorded, too, and the robust, vigorous playing is highly enjoyable. The record, of course, is a repressing from Polydor. . . . Recording pianists have been leaning somewhat heavily upon Johann Strauss of late, so that Rosenthal's contribution, a Vienna Carnival based on Strauss themes, can't be welcomed with more than guarded enthusiasm. Strauss is best when played voluptuously by a competent orchestra. Here one hears tunes from the Fledermaus and others tinkling more or less enjoyably; so that if no piano records of Strauss have yet found their way into your collection, this one is as good as any for the purpose. It is brilliantly played, and the piano tone, though in no wise remarkable, is creditably recorded. . . . Valse romantique dates from 1890, Pagodes from 1903. Both seem to receive here their first recordings. Debussy's abundant imagination and poetic fancy are pleasantly evident in each number, and the pianist, a friend and pupil of the composer, is more successful with them than he was with Hommage à S. Pickwick, Esq.-P. P. M. R. C. and Ondine, reviewed here last month. The recording, too, is somewhat better, but it still leaves much to be desired in clarity and fidelity to the original tone.

### CHAMBER MUSIC



### MOZART G-159 and G-160

TRIO IN G MAJOR, No. 5. (K. 564) Four sides. Budapest Trio (Nicolas Roth, Violin; Georges Roth, 'Cello; Lyell Barbour, Piano). Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

G-161
and
G-162
IMPORTED

TRIO IN E FLAT MAJOR, No. 7. (K. 498) Four sides. Rebecca Clarke (Viola), Frederick Thurston (Clarinet) and Kathleen Long (Piano). Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

These latest contributions by the admirable National Gramophonic Society to the gaiety of nations and the mental ease and serenity of those collectors who find the phonograph most abundantly rewarding when it presents works not frequently heard elsewhere are notable for several reasons. Among them might be mentioned: they add, without superfluous duplication, to the list of Mozart recordings; they constitute worthwhile additions to recorded chamber music; they impose no excessive strain upon the collector's hard-pushed pocketbook; and they do not mar the Society's stainless record of never having issued an altogether dull and valueless disc.

Elsewhere in this issue is expressed open-mouthed wonder at the quantity and quality of Mozart recordings with which we are favored this month. The curious, seeking to be convinced, need only glance under the Orchestra and Concerto sections, where reviews of several unusual items will be found. Of the two trios here given, that in E Flat Major, for viola, clarinet and piano, is deemed the more important and better piece of writing; nor, after hearing these discs, is one inclined to deviate from accepted opinion. The Trio in G Major, for violin, 'cello and piano, like the other four trios in this form-"Terzets," Mozart called them-was composed primarily for amateurs for playing at social gatherings. Mozart wrote it at first as a piano sonata, but in 1788 it was changed to its present form. In making the change, Mozart had the original composition copied and then simply added the violin and 'cello parts, making the necessary alterations afterwards. In consequence, the piano dominates throughout, the 'cello being kept well in the background and used, for the most part, as a bass instrument. There are three movements: an Allegro, an Andante and an Allegretto. There is some sparkling music in them, strikingly tuneful and easily grasped. One tune in the Allegretto, indeed, is so simple and is repeated so often that it tends to become monotonous.

As for the spirited interpretation by the Budapest Trio, it is distinguished and carefully done. The coördination between the players is always excellent, and they are a well-grouped body of artists. Likewise, it would be hard to quarref with the quality of the recording, which is excellently achieved and gives the piano the prominence Mozart intended it to have.



The Clarinet Trio was written two years earlier and was completed August 5, 1786. Franziska von Jacquin, sister of one of Mozart's best friends, was a favorite pupil of the composer's, and it was for her that the Trio was composed. She was an excellent pianist, Mozart greatly enjoyed playing the viola, and so it is very likely that in writing the piece he kept both his pupil and himself in mind. The viola is not treated as a bass instrument, and is given a leading part, the clarinet and piano parts being written so as not to obscure the string instrument.

Some extremely beautiful effects are obtained by the unusual combination, and the whole work is written with such delicacy and skill that its superiority over the Trio in G Major is readily apparent. The first movement is an Andante, not an Allegro, and it is played through without repetition. A Minuet, meditative, profound and charming, follows. The concluding Rondo is full of lively melodies and felicitous touches.

The interpretation is first-rate. Each performer is thoroughly competent, and enters into the proceedings with noticeable enthusiasm. The recording succeeds in reproducing their skilfully balanced and well-poised reading with the utmost clarity and fidelity. Together, these two sets provide as agreeable an hour of chamber music as even the most exacting could reasonably demand. Mozart adequately played and recorded would be hard to improve upon, and that, with no exaggeration, is exactly what these records give us.

### DEBUSSY CAPLET

C-LFX85 and C-LFX86

### SONATA FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO. (Debussy) Three sides and

DANSE DES PETITS NEGRES (Extraite d'Epiphanie). (Caplet) One side. Maurice Maréchal (Violoncello) and Robert Casadesus (Piano). Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

The various branches of the Columbia Company seem suddenly to have taken an uncommon interest in the Debussy 'Cello Sonata. Last month the local branch issued the work in a version played by Gaspar Cassado, and now these discs, played by Maréchal, arrive from French Columbia. In Mr. Cottler's review of the Cassado version, published last month, notes on the music were included. Both sets are satisfactorily played and recorded. Maréchal's is the more vigorous and brilliant, especially in the Sérénade. Which is the better version, of course, is a pretty problem, and it had better be left to Debussy connoisseurs to settle.

On the odd side of the Maréchal set the Danse des Petits Negres from André Caplet's Epiphanie, a musical "fresco" for solo violoncello and orchestra, is set forth. It was written in 1923. Here, of course, the piano is substituted for the orchestra. Caplet (1878-1925) was born at Havre. He was especially gifted as a conductor, so much so, in fact, that Debussy chose him in 1911 to undertake the performances at the Châtelet of Le Martyre de St. Sébastien. Caplet later came to Boston, where he introduced many modern French compositions. His works include pieces for orchestra, voice and piano, and a good deal of chamber music. The selection given here is colorful and very attractive, as is the lively interpretation which Maréchal and Casadesus give it.

## **OPERA**



**WAGNER**C-67897D
to
C-67914D

TANNHAUSER: Opera in Three Acts. Thirty-six sides. Bayreuth Festival Company of 1930 conducted by Karl Elmendorff. Eighteen 12-inch discs in two albums. Columbia Set No. 154. \$36.

Miniature Score: Eulenburg No. 903.

THE CAST	
LandgraveIvar	Andresen
TannhäuserSigismund	Pilinszky
WolframHerber	rt Janssen
BiterolfGeorge von Tschurtsc	-
ElisabethMari	a Müller
VenusRuth J	ost-Arden
Shepherd BoyErr	na Berger

Columbia's prompt repressing of the Bayreuth Festival Tannhäuser set, recently issued abroad, will be a source of considerable satisfaction to those who are familiar with the previous Bayreuth releases—releases that to some of us belong among the finest achievements of the phonograph. We hear rather frequently these days that Wagner is played-out, that he was, of course, a pretty good composer but that what he has to say is no longer relevant to the modern world, that later composers have shown us marvels that make Wagner by comparison seem old-fashioned and out-dated. These arguments have been put forward with great skill and plausibility, but somehow they seem to vanish into a mass of petty fustian every time one hears Wagner competently played. Perhaps he is, as is frequently charged, no longer "modern," but that doesn't seem so dreadful when it is remembered that the same charge can be applied to everything sooner or later.

The truth is, of course, that Wagner's appeal is far from exhausted, and it works its magic just as certainly as it ever did. The current pastime of thoughtfully preparing graves for the great ones of the past may afford pleasure to the diggers, but it scarcely ever works successfully. Tschaikowsky's, for example, was dug long ago, and elaborate preparations were made to put him in it, but somehow he refuses to remain there quietly and decently, as befits a respectable corpse. It is hardly likely that Wagner, a much greater man, will crawl into his with anything even remotely resembling docility. Tannhäuser, though commonly agreed to be inferior to the later music dramas, nonetheless has its moments of towering grandeur, and in this set they are brought out superbly. To be at all effective and interesting on the phonograph, or on the stage, for that matter, Tannhäuser must be performed with the utmost skill. To say that that is the case in this magnificent set would be only mild praise, but, our supply of superlatives being momentarily exhausted, it will have to suffice. Recording and interpretation are consistently excellent, and the whole thing could hardly have come from any place but Bayreuth. The set was reviewed in the February issue from the imported pressings; it is not necessary to tone down the high encomiums found in that notice.

# COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS\*

#### -New Issues-

#### COLUMBIA ANNOUNCES

#### BAYREUTH FESTIVAL RECORDINGS

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Biterolf (Minstrel)				

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AzucenaGiuseppina Zinetti
ManricoFrancesco Merli
Conte di LunaEnrico Molinari
FerrandoCorrado Zambelli
Ines
RuizEmilio Venturini
Un vecchio zingaroEnzo Arnaldi

Messenger, Leonora's Companions and Nuns, The Count's Followers, Soldiers, Gypsies, etc.

Verdi through the loudspeaker may be somewhat different from Verdi on the operatic stage, but the difference for those who are not unduly impressed by a gaudy show and preposterous struttings—whether on the stage or in the auditorium—will be a welcome one. Which is only to say that those who like Verdi, but do not particularly enjoy the absurd conditions under which he must commonly be seen and heard, will be delighted at the opportunity afforded by the phonograph to hear him under conditions in which he may be judged for his musical merits alone.

Rigoletto, La Traviata and Aïda are all available in complete versions—in several instances in two complete versions,—and these recordings at once established the fact that Verdi was a skilful enough composer not to need the trappings of the stage to create the effects he desired. There are one or two cases on record of persons who slept contentedly through the Metropolitan's performance of Aïda but who have listened intently to the records. These discs of Il Trovatore supply additional evidence, if, indeed, any is needed, in support of the theory that Verdi, divorced from the stage, still remains an immensely interesting and convincing composer. He had a keen dramatic sense and knowledge of the theatre, but he also knew how to utilize these things in his music alone.

On the stage the gloomy plot of *Il Trovatore* does not unfold itself without frequently taxing the listener's credulousness. Manrico's uncommon skill at always being on the spot where he is most needed, the Count's informative habit of letting us know the precise state of his emotions—these are only a few of the things that seem a little unreasonable, a little far-fetched in an actual performance. But on the phonograph, where the vision is not limited by a number of fat actors, their mouths wide open, their bodies striking grandiose postures, one feels more disposed to accept these things without the customary annoying doubts. Verdi's vivid music is sufficiently persuasive to make us overlook such trivial matters.

As for the performance here, it is skilfully presented. The cast, which contains a number of familiar names, is not an entirely first-rate one, but it enters into the spirit of the work splendidly, and each rôle is handled with assurance and a

# Victor Releases of Importance MUSICAL MASTERPIECE SERIES

Pictures at an Exhibition (Moussorgsky-Ravel). Played by the Boston Orchestra under the direction of Serge Koussevitzky, on four double-faced Victor Records (Nos. 7372-7375). In automatic sequence Nos. 7376-7379. In Album M-102 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$8.00.

This album affords delightful entertainment which will appeal alike to all music lovers. The composition was written by Moussorgsky as a suite for piano, representing his impressions of an exhibition of water colors and drawings by a friend who died in the prime of his manhood. The pictures were varied . . . so is the music. At Koussevitzky's suggestion Ravel orchestrated it—losing not one whit of its Russian flavor, yet giving it the same scintillating orchestral color that is typical of him. In The Old Castle, the saxophone plays a melancholy strain . . . in Bydlo, the music paints so graphic a picture of an enormous wagon passing by as to make comment superfluous. Other portions of the music are equally interesting. That it is recorded by Koussevitzky is significant, for it was he who not only instigated its arrangement, but also was responsible for its introduction to audiences in Europe and America. It requires seven record sides. The eighth is an arrangement, also by Ravel, of Sarabande, by Debussy.

Symphony No. 3 in C Minor (Saint-Saëns). Played by Piero Coppola and Symphony Orchestra on four double-faced Victor Records (Nos. 9908-9911). In automatic sequence Nos. 9912-9915. In Album M-100 with explanatory booklet. List price, \$6.50.

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Played by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. On Victor Record No. 7380. List Price, \$2.00.

Rigoletto-Caro nome and

Tutte le feste. Sung with orchestral accompaniment by Mme. Lily Pons on Victor Record 7383. List Price, \$2.00.

Badinage and

Selections from "Sweethearts." Played with piano accompaniment by Mme. Renée Chemet on Victor Record 1498. List Price, \$1.50. The New Moon-Lover Come Back to Me and

Wanting You. Piano accompaniment.

The Prodigal-Without a Song and

Life Is a Dream. Sung with orchestral accompaniment by Lawrence Tibbett on Victor Records 1506 and 1507 respectively. List Price, \$1.50 each.

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White Peacock from "Roman Sketches" (Charles T. Griffes). Played by Mme. Olga Samaroff on Victor Record 7384. List Price, \$2.00.



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thorough knowledge of its characteristics. The chorus, under the direction of Vittore Veniziani, sings with spirit and precision, and through the whole work the Milan Symphony, under the experienced hand of Molajoli, plays beautifully. The recording is nicely balanced and very clear.



WAGNER MASCAGNI C-2424D

LOHENGRIN: Mercé, mercé. (Wagner) One side and AMICO FRITZ: O amore, o bella luce. (Mascagni) One side. Dino Borgioli (Tenor) with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

The music of Lohengrin's farewell to the swan lends itself especially well to a voice such as Borgioli's. He sings it with admirable grace and finish and an unnamed orchestra supports him effectively. . . On the reverse side is a tempestuous number from Mascagni's Amico Fritz, skilfully rendered by the same artist.

VERDI V-7383 RIGOLETTO: (a) Act 1—Caro nome; (b) Act 2—Tutte le feste. Two sides. Lily Pons (Soprano) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

The aria Caro nome is often made, says Ernest Newman in his Stories of the Great Operas, "a mere vehicle for technical display. It is not only this, however; it is in addition an admirable piece of dramatic expression, the spontaneous outpourings of a young heart that feels for the first time the ecstasy of love. The . . . variation upon the main melody, for example, is not merely coloratura; in its delighted flutterings it is psychologically true to the character of the young girl." Miss Pons, whose appearances in the rôle of Gilda last Winter with the Metropolitan drew forth an astounding number of superlatives from the public and critics, sings the aria with flawless skill; her fine taste and her impeccable execution, so evident in her first two Victor records, are again apparent. The reverse side contains the aria Tutte le feste, from Act 2, in which Gilda tells her father of her deception and betrayal. In this aria, too, Miss Pons sings superbly. The orchestral accompaniment is well-played, and the recording is excellent.

MASSENET GLUCK C-50287D

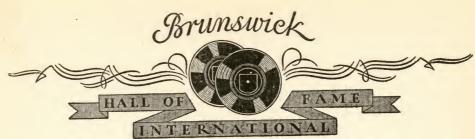
SAPHO: Ah! qu'il est loin, mon pays. (Massenet) One side and ALCESTE: Bannis la crainte et les alarmes. (Gluck) One side. Georges Thill (Tenor) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

R. STRAUSS
O-8731
IMPORTED

ARIADNE AUF NAXOS: (a) Sie atmet leicht; (b) In den schönen Feierkleidern. Two sides. Lotte Lehmann (Soprano) with Berlin State Opera Orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Georges Thill made his début with the Metropolitan only a few weeks ago, and confirmed the favorable impression he has made with his records. In the two numbers here, he is best, perhaps, in the Gluck. The Massenet aria is well sung, too, but the music is not very rewarding.

The Strauss numbers are delightful, and Lotte Lehmann, assisted by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, sings beautifully. The recording is excellent.



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF

#### MAY

No. 27 90140 to 9 0 1 4 3 incl.	BEETHOVEN—SYMPHONY NO. 2—D MAJOR—Op. 36 Complete on four records THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN ERICH KLEIBER, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$6.00 Compl. with Album
85001	HUGO WOLF—HEIMWEH (Longing for Home) Baritone Solo in German	Recorded in Europe
	RICHARD STRAUSS—HEIMLICHE AUFFORDERUNG (The Lover's Pledge) Baritone Solo in German HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS—Piano accompaniment by FRANZ RUPP	PRICE \$1.25
85002	LISZT—HUNGARIAN RHAPSODY NO. 6 In 2 parts Piano Solo, ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.25
90144 90145	MOZART—EINE KLEINE NACHTMUSIK (Serenade) Köchel Index No. 525—Complete on two records THE STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA, BERLIN OSCAR FRIED, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$3.00
90146	J. S. BACH—TOCCATA AND FUGUE—D MINOR In two parts—Organ Solo ALFRED SITTARD (Recorded on the Organ of St. Michael's Church, Hamburg)	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
90147	SCHUBERT — ROSAMUNDE (Zauberharfe) OVERTURE In two parts THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$1.50
	FAURE—PELLEAS ET MELISANDE PRELUDE and SPINNING SONG (Fileuses)	
90148 90149	FAURE—PELLEAS ET MELISANDE—SICILIENNE  RAVEL—PAVANE FOR A DEAD PRINCESS  (Pavane Pour Une Infante Défunte)  THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, EBERLIN  ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor	Recorded in Europe PRICE \$3.00

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### VOCAL



WOLF
PD-23149

DER RATTENFANGER. One side and AUFTRAG. One side. Heinrich Rehkemper (Baritone) with piano accompaniment by Michael Raucheisen. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

WOLF R. STRAUSS B-85001 HEIMWEH. (Wolf) One side and
HEIMLICHE AUFFORDERUNG. (R. Strauss) One side.
Heinrich Schlusnus (Baritone) with piano accompaniment by
Franz Rupp. One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

It would be hard to find better interpreters than Schlusnus and Rehkemper of these Wolf songs. The former possesses the more moving and deeply expressive voice, and it is of a finer quality. But Rehkemper manages his so cunningly that any natural shortcomings are hidden or at least not noticed. The two numbers sung by him are sparkling and animated pieces, and they fit his voice admirably. Schlusnus' selections, a Wolf and a Strauss song, are more serious in character, and so adapt themselves extremely well to his voice. In all of these songs the piano accompaniment is a distinct feature, and the recording is beyond cavil. The three Wolf songs seem here to receive their first recordings.

QUILTER CADMAN C-2425D NOW SLEEPS THE CRIMSON PETAL. (Quilter) One side and

FROM THE LAND OF THE SKY BLUE WATER. (Cadman) One side. Louis Graveure (Tenor) with piano accompaniment by Sanford Schlussel. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

YOUMANS STRAUS V-1507 WITHOUT A SONG. (Rose-Eliscu-Youmans) One side and LIFE IS A DREAM. (Arthur Freed-Oscar Straus) One side. Lawrence Tibbett (Baritone) with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

ROMBERG V-1506 WANTING YOU. (Hammerstein-Romberg) One side and LOVER COME BACK TO ME. (Hammerstein-Romberg) One side. Lawrence Tibbett (Baritone) with piano accompaniment by Stewart Wille. One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

This is a rather depressing list and offers nothing of much consequence. Graveure sings his numbers acceptably, and the recording is very good. It is conceivable that he could have selected better recording material. . . . Lawrence Tibbett, assisted in one record by an orchestra, in the other by a piano, discusses life's problems, perplexities, disappointments, joys and sorrows with the profundity now deemed proper for the edification of movie fans. This sort of music for six days of the week, hymns on the seventh—such is the elevating musical diet of most of the people of the land that supports the Philadelphia, Chicago, New York Philharmonic-Symphony and Boston Orchestras.

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WIENIAWSKI C-50284D AIR RUSSE. Two sides. René Bénédetti (Violin) with piano accompaniment. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The Herbert tunes were arranged by Renée Chemet for violin. One wonders what Herbert himself would think of this incredible performance. In the first number the violinist's fiddle fairly drips with honey, and as if that were not enough a pipe organ, chimes and piano are thrown in to heighten the effect. Badinage is played with a sort of exaggerated, mawkish kittenishness—if there is such a word,—scarcely very pleasant to listen to. It is a difficult, sticky disc to sit through. . . . After the Chemet performance, Bénédetti comes as a gust of cold, invigorating air. Instead of slush, we have fire and brilliance.

BACH WAGNER C-50289D AIR FOR G STRING. (Bach-Wilhelmj) One side and DIE MEISTERSINGER: *Prize Song*. (Wagner-Wilhemj) One side. Efrem Zimbalist (Violin) with piano accompaniment. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The recording is very powerful, and Zimbalist is in an exceedingly sentimental mood. Where, one wonders, is the public that seeks such things?

## **ORGAN**



WIDOR C-50285D SYMPHONY NO. 2: Finale. One side and SYMPHONY NO. 4: Toccata. One side. Edouard Commette (Organ). One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

**BACH** B-90146

TOCCATA AND FUGUE in D Minor. Two sides. Alfred Sittard (Organ). One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

As organ records go, these are good ones. Commette, playing on the organ of St. Jean Cathedral, Lyons, France, renders the Widor pieces with power and obvious skill. The recording, moreover, is more successful than the average organ recording, and the tone, instead of sprawling all over the place, manages to hold together fairly well. . . . Sittard's number, of course, is the Toccata and Fugue long since made famous, to the phonograph audience at any rate, by Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra. So far as the phonograph is concerned, the orchestral version seems the more successful, if only because of the splendor of the recording. Sittard, however, using the organ of St. Michael's Church, Hamburg, plays the piece superbly, and the recording is commendable.



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# CORRESPONDENCE



Counterblast

Editor, Disques:

What is all this beating of wind and flapping of wings in the Correspondence Department of your interesting magazine over the only-too-true Parkhurst article of a few issues ago? In the April number Gentle Readers from enlightened New England and the Cotton Belt turn indignant and poetical. To anyone interested in music, reading such a eulogy about musical audiences and the desire to see the performer in the flesh reads like folk-lore. Anyone who has been to a few concerts or heard an opera cannot fail to note the troop of over-dressed and underbred persons who attend, with whom you are compelled to take your music.

The picture of Paderewski in Boston is touching—it should be incorporated in a Rotary Club speech. It is true that many go to see him in the flesh, and we might add, not to hear his music. Listen to the applause that follows a Beethoven sonata vs. a silly Chopin piece. A Paderewski recital is almost a failure if he doesn't play his banal minuet. When Rachmaninoff plays Bach they endure it, but when he plays his own C Minor Prelude—well, then it's "wonderful."

One of your correspondents insists that musically intelligent folks go to operas and assures you that he has never heard of the inconveniences of concert halls although he has been attending twenty years. I presume that he has read those lines in the opening page of your April issue, where in no uncertain terms you state that the musical intelligence that buys records is surely above the level of an opera audience. Most of us thought that everyone knew that. When the opera season just passed opened Time magazine reported it for all American cities saying "with the usual minority of music lovers." Who hasn't tried to hear the Tristan prelude punctuated with the dropping of seats by the late-comers? The audience talks in the musical interludes, thinks that the preludes to the acts have no bearing whatever on the "flesh and blood performance" to follow. When they give Parsifal in Philadelphia they keep

quiet in the Transformation Scene, probably awed by the religious atmosphere, but when they play the Rhine Journey in Götterdämerung it's the signal to talk-in fact if peanuts were sold on the premises they'd munch them praying for the lights to terminate the orchestration. Last year when a Philadelphia company gave The Ring for the education of their subscribers, Rhinegold, with no intermissions, fooled them completely. At the end of the first scene, with the house in darkness, boxholders attempted to find their way out, while most of the audience chatted. When the Metropolitan gives Meistersinger, few seats, conspicuously boxes, are filled at the opening of the performance, but when they give Rigoletto, or Lucia or the Barber, and such tripe, the house is filled from the beginning; in fact you couldn't get tickets because they are all bought up by the "music lovers."

These, my countrymen, are the "inconveniences" of musical halls that your correspondent wonders about. H. L. Mencken says that ninety per cent of those who attend opera don't know what it's all about; sometimes I feel that this is a rather conservative estimate. Van Vechten in "Red" says: "No music is good enough to stand up against the depressing circumstances of a performance at Carnegie Hall." . . .

The arguments in the second letter are also amusing. We are given to understand that the Little Theatre flourishes because flesh and blood performances are better than the talkies. Shades of 'Gene O'Neill! Did you ever see a Molnar play in the theatre and then see it emasculated for movie audiences? We go to the theatre for good drama and avoid the movies with their audiences of child minds who gush over Garbo, Gilbert, et al. Certainly your writer would only get a handful to hear Beethoven's Ninth on a Victrola. Even if the records were better than any orchestra's rendition, you would have trouble getting an audience. When they hear just phonograph records they are just interested in music. Let them dress in evening clothes and get the leading citizens of New Orleans, and I am sure, whether they like music or not, your Victrola concert will be a success!

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#### Correspondence (Continued)

The statement made in italics about the world becoming better musically is debatable, especially that the radio is bringing bigger audiences to chamber music. I rarely hear of a string quartette on the air, but I am quite conscious that a glorious washing of jazz is being treated to the American people via the Radio Route, and I, personally, doubt the quality of a listener who will hear the Brahms C Minor movements interrupted by a Sales Talk!

I still prefer the phonograph. And we all hope that the phonograph will be supreme just as Mr. Parkhurst says it will. The only reason we now hear orchestra concerts, a soloist in recital, or The Ring at the opera is that we have the opportunity to hear it better than on the phonograph. There are many records which fall short of the composition; e.g., Beethoven's Fifth on the records can be surpassed by most any first-rate orchestra-the Eroica too does not come up to expectations. The Philadelphia Orchestra, in the flesh, certainly plays Schubert's C Major better than the records, but some of the Philadelphia recordings, notably the Brahms Second and the Venusburg music, are certainly better on the records than heard by most orchestras. This enjoyment is for the home and is much better than an over-heated, poorly-ventilated music hall with its many uncomfortable seats and its so-called musical audience. A poor orchestra program, such as the Philadelphia gave from time to time this season under Gabrilowitsch with such dainties as Lizst's Les Preludes and his Second Hungarian Rhapsody (for an orchestra!) and a symphony by a certain I. Paderewski which was the worst heard in these parts for years, is surely poorer than a program you make at home with your own recordingsgood recordings which are increasing in numbers-under pleasant auspices of a comfortable room without the jarring waywardness of the average audience, whose idea of opera is Verdi-or worse; of a violin selection par excellence is one of those terrible encores Kreisler plays-of an orchestra giving the most pleasure: Bolero.

The phonograph will live and continue to give musical joy for those who like music, and its future will no doubt be more glorious than the past with better recordings being constantly made. These programs that you want to hear, if you are just musical and want the music for itself, you can have in your home, and the Collecting Habit of records and hearing them, I assure you, is just as fascinating as hearing music, sometimes not always to your liking on an un-balanced program, in a concert hall. We still hope for more and better records and are not being lured away by artists in the flesh or national hook-ups!

Monroe E. Voigtsberger

Melrose Park, Pa.

#### Victor Herbert

Editor, Disques:

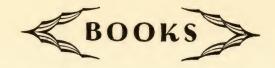
In my letter of appreciation of Mr. Powell's article on sentimentality, I purposely omitted reference to a statement of his to which I objected, and this omission has since been on my conscience. Mr. Powell refers to Victor Herbert as the High Priest of the Maudlin Goddess, and I feel that this statement requires some qualification.

Herbert's popularity is based on some half dozen songs, none of which are among his best and most characteristic. No doubt this is the Herbert of which Mr. Powell was thinking. The *ipsissimus* Herbert is to be found, not in these songs, but in the dozens of altogether charming and original things scattered through his many scores, of which Mr. Man-in-the-street knows or remembers almost nothing. Some of these, it is true, were settings of mediocre lyrics—like Schubert, he could set a hand-bill to music—and this accounts to a degree for their oblivion.

Going through Herbert's scores always causes me to feel a pang when I think of the quantity of sparkling and entrancing music which has been pushed aside by the public to make room for such inferior stuff as When you're away and Kiss me again. More than any other composer, Herbert is best known by his worst and least characteristic compositions, which is a pity.

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New York, N. Y.



BEETHOVEN AND HIS FORERUNNERS. By Daniel Gregory Mason. New York: *The Macmillan Co.* \$2.

This book, first published in November, 1904, now appears in a new edition. Of the numerous writers on musical subjects in America today, surely none states his ideas more clearly, more forcefully and more concisely than Mr. Mason. Plenty have ideas more novel, more hair-raising, more charming, more arresting; but generally time proves them to be unsound, and so, like Jurgen's women, they are quickly relegated to limbo. Mr. Mason is cautious and conservative, but seldom tedious. His caution proceeds not from a lack of ideas but from a careful consideration of the subjects he proposes to discuss. One feels that he is constantly beset with all sorts of novel and interesting theories, but, exercising more restraint and perpension than most of his colleagues, he refuses to let them get into type until they have been thoroughly cooled and tested. If then they still seem dubious, they are tossed into the scrap-basket, and a fresh body is brought in for the same devastating examination. There would be very little for us to read if other writers subjected their material to the same cruel analysis that is here being ascribed to Mr. Mason.

So that when we read a book or a magazine article from his pen we commonly can expect something genuinely worth reading. Caution is a virtue much too highly praised these stodgy days, since it is generally used to cover a mass of flabby platitudes. It is therefore immensely agreeable to find so admirable a justification of it as Mr. Mason represents.

In this volume he gives us a brief but closely written outline of the salient musical developments before the arrival of Beethoven. Palestrina, Bach, Haydn and Mozart are discussed at some length, and considered, properly, in relation to the ages, and the beliefs of those ages, in which they lived. "The most familiar, and in some respects the most characteristic, element of mysticism is its ecstatic, devout attitude towards the deity or Absolute it worships. The mystic throws himself on the ground before his God, so to

speak, in an ecstasy of complete self-abandonment and surrender. He is utterly prone, passive, will-less. His worship is the most complete, the most devout worship of which there is record." The music of Palestrina and his contemporaries reflected this type of feeling more consummately than any in the whole history of art. Later, idealism, which "is, in essence, a belief in the possibility of attaining the divine through a selective manipulation of the actual," replaced mysticism, and with memorable effects upon art. Since "idealism insists both on the claims of all legitimate human impulses to recognition, and on their submission to adjustment in the interests of a rounded human nature, idealism is a potent stimulus to true art." For "wherever there is direct, complete, and beautiful expression of what seems to man precious, there is art. Wherever, on the contrary, there is suppression of any genuine human impulse, in fancied service to some other, as in the case of mediæval mysticism, there is artistic immaturity or arrest."

But it isn't fair to continue thus, for there is no space to consider Mr. Mason's book in its entirety, and to dwell on a few points such as these is to overlook a great deal of material equally as interesting and provocative. Those who have already read the book need not be reminded again of its value; those who haven't, whether they be musicians or merely humble Zuleika Dobsons, could do so with great profit.

THE GOLDEN TREASURY OF RE-CORDED MUSIC: Vol. III—César Franck. By Alec Robertson. London: The Gramophone Co., Ltd. 40c.

This useful series already includes volumes on Bach and Beethoven. Unfortunately, they are somewhat limited in scope, for only H. M. V. records are discussed. But the H. M. V. catalogue is surely no slim one, and in it can be found most of Franck's major works. Mr. Robertson's notes are rather sketchy, but they are unfailingly shrewd and informative, and he illustrates each work with musical quotations. Each composition is discussed according to the record sides. The volume is highly recommended.

